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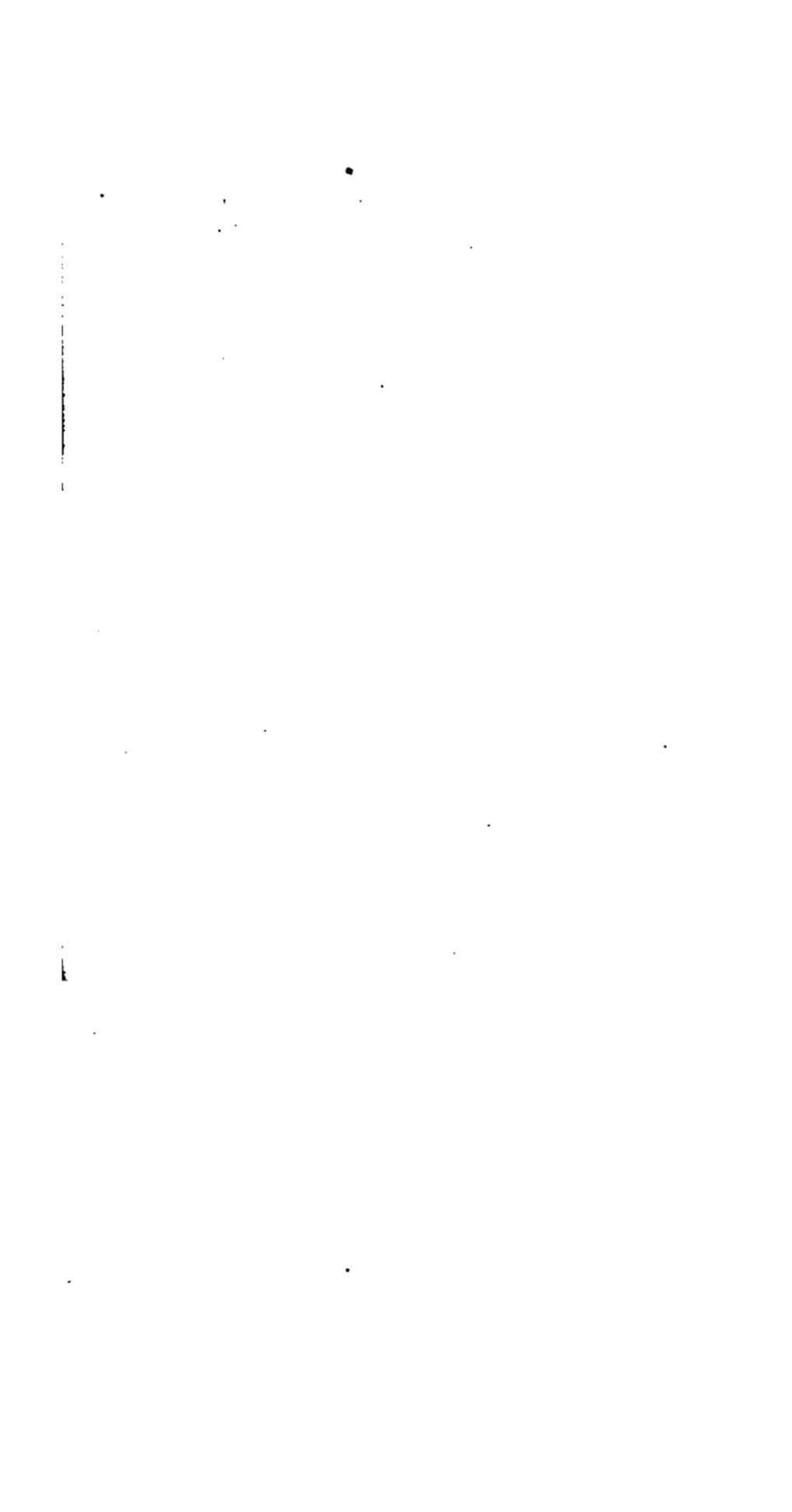


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ON CONFIRMATION:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE A CONFIRMATION,

LATELY HELD WITHIN THE

DIOCESE OF LONDON;

AND NOW

PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF SEVERAL OF THE
CONGREGATION.

BY THE

REV. JOS. BENSON, D.D.

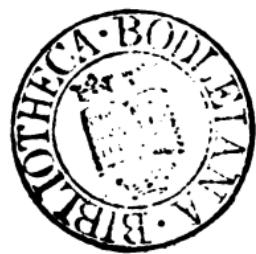
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MY YOUNG FRIENDS,

To you, who have lately been confirmed, the following discourse is dedicated, which was composed with a heartfelt desire and earnest prayer to God, that you may be saved.

At that time I had not any intention of publishing it. It is printed at the request of some who heard it delivered from the pulpit.

That their expectations may not be disappointed, that, among other means, it may contribute to the strengthening of your faith, and your growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I commend it to *Him that giveth the increase*, and entreat you to join me in praying, that he may bless it to your present and everlasting comfort.

And that God's Holy Spirit, which you have invoked in the solemn rite of Confirmation, may dwell in you, and bear witness with your spirits that you are the children of God; and that your *Father, who is in heaven*, may shed abroad his *love in your hearts*, and constrain you to live unto

Him, and serve Him with continually increasing delight in this world, until you shall be translated into the kingdom of his dear Son in heaven, is the prayer

Of your affectionate and faithful Minister,

•
J. B.

July 24, 1835.

A

S E R M O N,

¶c.

Acts viii. 14—17.

Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

THE laying on of hands is a ceremony, which has always been used in the Christian Church. It seems to be a natural and significant way of denoting the blessing of any person. Nature itself suggests it; and if we would signify, that any thing is communicated from God through the ministration of man, we can scarcely imagine any other outward sign which could express this so well, as the stretching out, or the laying on, of the hands.

Moses, in his ministerial character, was the representative of God. In this character his hand was stretched out, to signify the exertion of that Divine power, by which the miracles in Egypt were performed; and all nature became immediately obedient to him, not for any virtue inherent in himself, but because the hand of the Almighty concurred with the hand of his minister. When the high-priest of the Jews delivered the solemn form of blessing, he stretched out his hands to the people. Thus *Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people, and blessed them*¹. When Jacob, with a parental and authoritative affection, pronounced a blessing on the two sons of Joseph, he stretched out his hands upon them, *And said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel (viz. Christ the Redeemer) which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads*². Again, Moses laid his hands upon the head of Joshua³, when he appointed him to succeed him, as a prophet and leader of the people of Israel. The Apostles also used the same form in conferring the Holy Ghost⁴.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the laying on of hands joined with the first principles of the *Christian profession*; as repentance, faith, baptism,

¹ *Lev. ix. 22.*

² *Gen. xlvi. 15, 16.*

³ *Deut. xxxiv. 9.*

⁴ *Acts viii. 17.*

resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment¹. In the text we learn, that when the Apostles had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent among them Peter and John, who, having prayed for them, laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Again, when Paul and Barnabas were minded to go and visit their brethren in every city, where they had preached the word of the Lord, *Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches*². It appears, then, that Confirmation, or the laying on of hands, was used in the time of the Apostles. And that it was not a part of Baptism, must be concluded from what took place at Samaria. When *they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women*³. The Apostles, Peter and John, afterwards laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. *And when they brought young children to Christ, that he should touch them, he put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

That the rite of Confirmation did not cease with the Apostles, is shown by the custom of the Church to the time of the Reformation, and by the writings of those who lived near to the days of the Apostles,

¹ *Heb. vi. 2.*

² *Acts xv. 41.*

³ *Acts viii. 12.*

which not only prove the use of this rite, but also state one particular purpose for which it was used, viz. that of praying for the Holy Spirit on those who had been baptized.

Tertullian says, “After Baptism succeeds laying on of hands by benediction, *calling for and invoking the Holy Spirit.*” St. Cyprian, speaking of the Confirmation of the Samaritan converts, saith, “The same custom is observed among us, that they who are baptized may be presented to the Governors of the Church, that by our prayer and imposition of hands, they may *receive the Holy Ghost*, and be perfected *with the seal of Christ.*” St. Jerome asks, “Are you ignorant, that now this is the custom of the Churches upon those who have been baptized, afterwards to *lay hands*, and thus *invoke the Holy Spirit?* Do you ask,—where is it written? In the Acts of the Apostles. Although,” he observes, “if there were no authority of Scripture for it, the consent of the world, in this particular, has the force of a command.” Other testimonies of the use and design of this institution might be quoted, but these are sufficient for our present purpose.

A ceremony, which traces its origin to men inspired with the extraordinary gifts of God’s Holy Spirit, and which is supported by the practice of all succeeding ages, must be admitted to have a

well-grounded claim on our highest veneration ; “ it points to *inspiration* for its *origin*, and adduces *time* for its *advocate*.”

In regard to the excellency of Confirmation, as practised in the Church of England, let us hear the opinion of the learned and pious Bishop Hall. Speaking of this rite, as ministered to them who had been instructed in Christ’s Religion, he says :

“ Now let any reader, let any adversary say, whether any determination could be more holily rational, or more evidently conduced to the furthering of the welfare and salvation of Christian souls, in this case, than this, which our mother, the Church of England, hath, upon sad and serious deliberation, fixed upon ; which, if it had been accordingly executed, with that constant care and fidelity as it ought, would certainly have prevented many foul and monstrous exorbitances in matter of doctrine, and many horrible enormities in the practice of men’s lives ; with both which, we are miserably pestered and overrun.

“ When the party then is, upon due examination, found fit, both for age and knowledge, he is to be, in due season, presented to the Imposition of hands, which is ordained to be performed with such holy comeliness, and such vigour of devotion, as, be it spoken without envy, the Church of England may be herein well proposed as a pattern to

all the Christian Churches in the world. Doubtless, if there be any Church under Heaven that hath continued the Apostolical Institution and practice of the Imposition of hands in the native simplicity and purity thereof, it is the Church of England.”—*Vol. IX. p. 801.*

More has been adduced on these points than was at first intended; but it has been done, because Confirmation is not, in the present age, regarded in the way in which, I think, it deserves; and because it is to be feared that many a soul is lost from not being urged, at the most critical period of its existence, to *call its ways to remembrance*¹, and to choose *the good and right way*². It is too often left to pursue the road into which chance may turn it, before it is called upon to stand still, and think whither that road leadeth. It is often bewildered in errors, before it is brought to make a profession of its faith, and to pray for that assistance, by which it may be *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*³. Against these evils, a due preparation for, and a serious attention during the ceremony of Confirmation, will contribute greatly to guard it. Ye, who are parents, godfathers, and godmothers, masters and mistresses of families, consider this, I

¹ *Ps. cxix. 59.*

² *1 Sam. xii. 23.*

³ *1 Pet. i. 5.*

beseech you; and you will not neglect to advise and exhort your children, and those for whom you are responsible before God, to embrace the opportunity, which is now offered to them, of coming forward and declaring their willingness, their longing desire of belonging *to the household of faith*¹—of being Christians—of being candidates, I will not say for Confirmation merely, that would be confining their thoughts too much, but candidates for admission into the kingdom of Christ—into His kingdom of grace now, immediately; which will lead to their admission into His kingdom of glory, eternally. And ye, who are candidates for Confirmation, meditate, seriously, on *the hope that is set before*² you; think to what you are aspiring, not to a corruptible crown, but an incorruptible; not to the hand of the Bishop only, but to the countenance, the favour of the Lord, your God—that His blessing may rest upon you, and that His Spirit may be with you, and in you. Bear in mind that you are candidates, not for an earthly prize, but for all the benefits of Jesus Christ's mediation, for the pardon of your sins, for acceptance with God, for justification; for sanctification, for life and immortality, for the kingdom of Heaven.

For these inestimable prizes ye may all enter

¹ Gal. vi. 10.

² Heb. vi. 18.

your names, and none of you be disappointed ; for *they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize*¹. But here ye may so run, that all may obtain. Considering the greatness of the reward, and the certainty of success, is there one whose *heart does not burn within him*² to become a candidate ? or is there a parent who will not urge his son or his daughter to start in so glorious a contest ?

Let us notice more particularly some of the benefits of this Institution. It is highly useful, at an age, when opinions and habits are beginning to be formed, to have the mind and heart prepossessed with religious truth ; to have ground, yet neutral, occupied by a friendly power, before it is seized by an enemy. The sins and follies of this world soon engage the attention ; they have a powerful influence over the passions and conduct. Our spiritual enemy is ever watching an opportunity to destroy. The unwary youth, by nature pleased with the allurements of his spiritual enemies, if left to himself, soon becomes their prey. But Confirmation calls his attention to his God, to his Saviour, and to the care of his soul. It reminds him, that verily there is a God, who so loves us, *that He has given His only begotten Son, to be the propitiation for our sins.* It tells him what

¹ *1 Cor. ix. 24.*

² *Luke xxiv. 32.*

great things God has done for him, what He has revealed, what He has forbidden, what He has commanded, what He has promised to those who believe and obey Him, and what He has threatened to the unbelieving and disobedient.

But the benefits of this ordinance cannot be better set before you, than in the words of the learned Hooker. He says, "By this means it came to pass, that children in expectation thereof (of Confirmation) were seasoned with the principles of true religion, and before malice and corrupt examples depraved their minds, a good foundation was laid betimes for direction of the course of their whole lives, the seed of the Church of God was preserved sincere and sound; the Prelates and Fathers of God's family, to whom the cure of their souls belongeth, saw, by trial and examination of them, a part of their own heavy burthen discharged, reaped comfort by beholding the first beginnings of true godliness in tender years, glorified Him whose praise they found in the mouths of infants, and neglected not so fit opportunity of giving every one fatherly encouragement and exhortation. Whereunto Imposition of hands and prayer being added, our warrant for the good effect thereof is the same which Patriarchs, Prophets, *Priests, Apostles, Fathers, and men of God have had for such their particular invocations and bene-*

dictions, as no man, I suppose, professing truth of religion, will easily think to have been without fruit."—*Hooker by Dobson, vol. i. p. 663.*

May God, in his mercy, grant fruit abundantly to you, my young brethren!

Again, the encouragement which this rite holds out, is great. The objects which Christians have in view are great and glorious. But between them and these objects there are many obstacles. The ceremony of Confirmation assures them that these obstacles can be surmounted. It informs them, that notwithstanding the mischief and ruin which sin hath wrought, they may yet become children of God, and obtain everlasting life. It certifies them of the favor and goodness of God towards them. It tells them that on the day, in which they shall *avouch the Lord to be their God, and to walk in his ways; the Lord will avouch them to be his peculiar people*¹. It comforts them in their serious and earnest entrance on their Christian profession, because He, to whose service they are devoting themselves, hath said, *Be strong, and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest*².

It is not to be denied, that the warfare, in which

¹ *Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.*

² *Josh. i. 9.*

the Christian engages, is difficult and dangerous. It is not to be supposed that all is done, when you have enlisted under the banners of Christ. The battle remains to be fought, and you will require strength and armour for the contest. Go not forth into the world with the deceitful expectation that you will meet no enemy. On the contrary, you will be beset with enemies on every side ; with enemies powerful, deceiving, and watchful ; with enemies from without and from within. The road you have to travel will be filled with them, most dangerous when least expected. One benefit of Confirmation is to supply you with armour proper for your defence, at a time when your enemies are most numerous ; when they are most likely to assail you ; when your dangers are great, and your power of resistance is weak. This benefit was remarkably exemplified in the case of the Apostles. They had been called by Christ himself to be His disciples ; they had professed their repentance, their faith, their attachment to Him. Still they were slow of heart to believe. In the time of trial they denied Him, forsook Him, and fled. *He* who knew what was in man, knew their need of strength from above, and therefore instructed them not to go forth to *their work, until they were endued with power from on high* !

On the day of Pentecost they received that power; and immediately they who before had understood none of His sayings¹, comprehended clearly the great doctrines of human redemption. They who before were wavering, were *confirmed*, and not only performed, by Divine aid, miraculous deeds, but exhibited in their lives and conversation such faith and holiness, as evidently demonstrated the power of the Gospel.

We have another instance in our blessed Saviour himself. In His human nature He went not forth to the works of Him that sent Him; in particular He exposed not Himself to the temptation, to which, for our sakes, He submitted, until He had been baptized, and had received the Holy Ghost; which, when He had come up out of the water, and was praying, descended upon Him like a dove.

These things, my brethren, were done, and have been written, for our instruction and admonition. And what do they teach us? If the Apostles neither understood the things which Christ spake unto them, nor were able to withstand trials, *until they were endued with power from above*; if Christ himself went not into the wilderness until *the Holy Spirit* had descended upon Him; these *things should teach His disciples*, that “they are

¹ Luke xviii. 34. John xii. 16.

not sufficient of themselves to think, or do any thing¹, as of themselves. They should teach them how greatly they need the help of God's Holy Spirit, to enable them to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life². Happy they to whom are granted the protecting, the strengthening, the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit! It was, indeed, expedient for us that Christ should go away, that he might send to us the Comforter, the Spirit of truth.

This, my brethren, is one principal object of Confirmation, viz. to pray that God's Holy Spirit may be given to them, *who have professed a good profession before many witnesses³.* Let me entreat your most earnest attention to this. Next to the incarnation of the Son of God, and the recovery of a lost world by His death and sacrifice, the most valuable gift, that the Almighty Creator ever bestowed upon the sons of men, was the gift of the Holy Spirit. As in the Creation, the earth was *without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep: until the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters⁴:* so it is in the new creation. We are as a dead lump, until we are moved and enlivened by the Spirit of God. We who *were dead in trespasses and sins⁵*, are made alive to

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

² 1 Tim. vi. 12.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gen. i. 2.

⁵ Eph. ii. 1.

God by Him. He quickens, He enlightens, He gives the knowledge of religious truth, He reveals the mysteries of godliness, He stirs up holy desires, He brings those desires to good effect, He *that raised up Jesus from the dead will quicken our mortal bodies*¹. He is the beginning, the progress, the consummation of our spiritual life. Christ died for our sins, and we appropriate to ourselves the benefits of Christ's death, when we are renewed, justified, strengthened, and sanctified by the Spirit of God.

When, therefore, you have ratified and confirmed, in your own persons, the solemn promise and vow, that was made in your name at your Baptism, observe well the purport of the prayers which the Bishop and the congregation will then offer up in your behalf. It is that you may be strengthened with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, that God may daily increase in you the manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and the spirit of holy fear². It is that God may defend you with His heavenly grace; that you may continue *His* for ever, and daily increase in His Holy Spirit more and more, until you come unto His heavenly kingdom³. O consider, I beseech you, how big

¹ Rom. viii. 11.

² Order of Confirmation.

with importance to every one of you will be that precious moment. May God Almighty grant you grace to know and to feel its importance, that so your hearts may be fully prepared to receive the full benefit of these His gifts ! Your eternal salvation may depend on the earnestness and sincerity of your devotion in that hour. Think how *dreadful is that place, which to you may be none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven*¹. And *when the glory of the Lord filleth the house of the Lord*², be not ye inattentive, be not unconcerned and indifferent. Pray with all the fervour of your hearts and minds, that you may every one of you receive your portion of the heavenly blessing. Remember, that it is for *your* immortal souls that these prayers are offered. Regard not the ceremony as merely formal and outward, completed by the laying on of the hands of the Bishop. This is indeed a sign or token of the favour and goodness of God towards you, but it is the fervent prayer of faith, which will impart life and vigour to the ceremony.

We scarcely ever find the laying on of hands mentioned *without prayer*. When Jacob laid his hands on the sons of Joseph, he *prayed* God, and the Angel who redeemed him, to bless the lads.

¹ Gen. xxviii. 17.

² 1 Kings viii. 11.

When Moses laid his hands on Joshua, he *prayed* that he might be filled with the spirit of wisdom; and when the people of Samaria were confirmed by Peter and John, they *prayed* that they might receive the Holy Ghost. And the ceremony will profit you nothing, if your own hearts are not engaged and affected. Pray therefore fervently, and confidently. Ask in faith, nothing wavering, and you will receive¹. Consider seriously what you pray for, and your minds will not want attention, your hearts will not want devotion, and your prayers will not want fervour and earnestness. You confirm your promises of repentance, faith, and obedience, and God confirms to you the promise of making you his children by adoption and grace. You enter on a new life, you are admitted into a new state, containing the pardon of your sins, the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and the promise of life and glory everlasting. Seek diligently, and you will find all these glorious promises. On such an occasion there is joy in heaven—on earth also let us rejoice.

Finally—Let not Confirmation be regarded as a ceremony, which is to have no concern nor connection with your future life. The good resolutions which you may now make, will soon be

¹ James i. 6.

broken, unless they are continually strengthened by the Word of God, by prayer, and by the help of the Holy Spirit. Your lamps, if not frequently trimmed, will soon go out. *Search then the Scriptures; they are they which testify of¹ Christ.* Ask daily in private prayer, and in a regular attendance in the house of God, that *you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ².* Spiritual blessings are promised to them who ask. Seek them in sincerity and truth, and be assured that God will hear and answer your prayers. He it is that now inclines your hearts to seek his favour; *for the preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord³.* Look on this as a pledge of his goodwill towards you; let it be an encouragement to you to *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that ye may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need⁴.* And as soon as you can, with a stedfast trust in God's mercy through Jesus Christ, be partakers of the Lord's Supper. This holy sacrament was instituted to keep alive the continual remembrance of the death and sacrifice of Christ, through whom alone you receive the atonement, through whom your prayers ascend to the throne of grace, through whom you

¹ John v. 39.

² Prov. xvi. 1.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

⁴ Heb. iv. 16.

receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is the essence of our religion; not the blood of bulls and goats, but the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Meditate often upon it; contemplate the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, who *hath washed us from our sins in his own blood*¹. And that the cares or the customs of the world may never efface from your memory this great sacrifice, this stupendous display of unbounded love and mercy, by which your sins are forgiven, and your peace made with God, come frequently to the Lord's table. Renew there your baptismal vow, and receive continually fresh pledges of Divine favour. This is one of the most effectual means of grace; neglect it not—delay it not to a more convenient season. A more convenient season cannot be expected than the present, in which you are entering into a covenant with God through faith in Jesus Christ, and praying that you *may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*²; and a season in which we commemorate, as on the next Sabbath-day³, the first miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost. If you, who will then have been confirmed, cannot, after a suitable preparation, come to the sacrament of the body and blood

¹ Rev. i. 5.

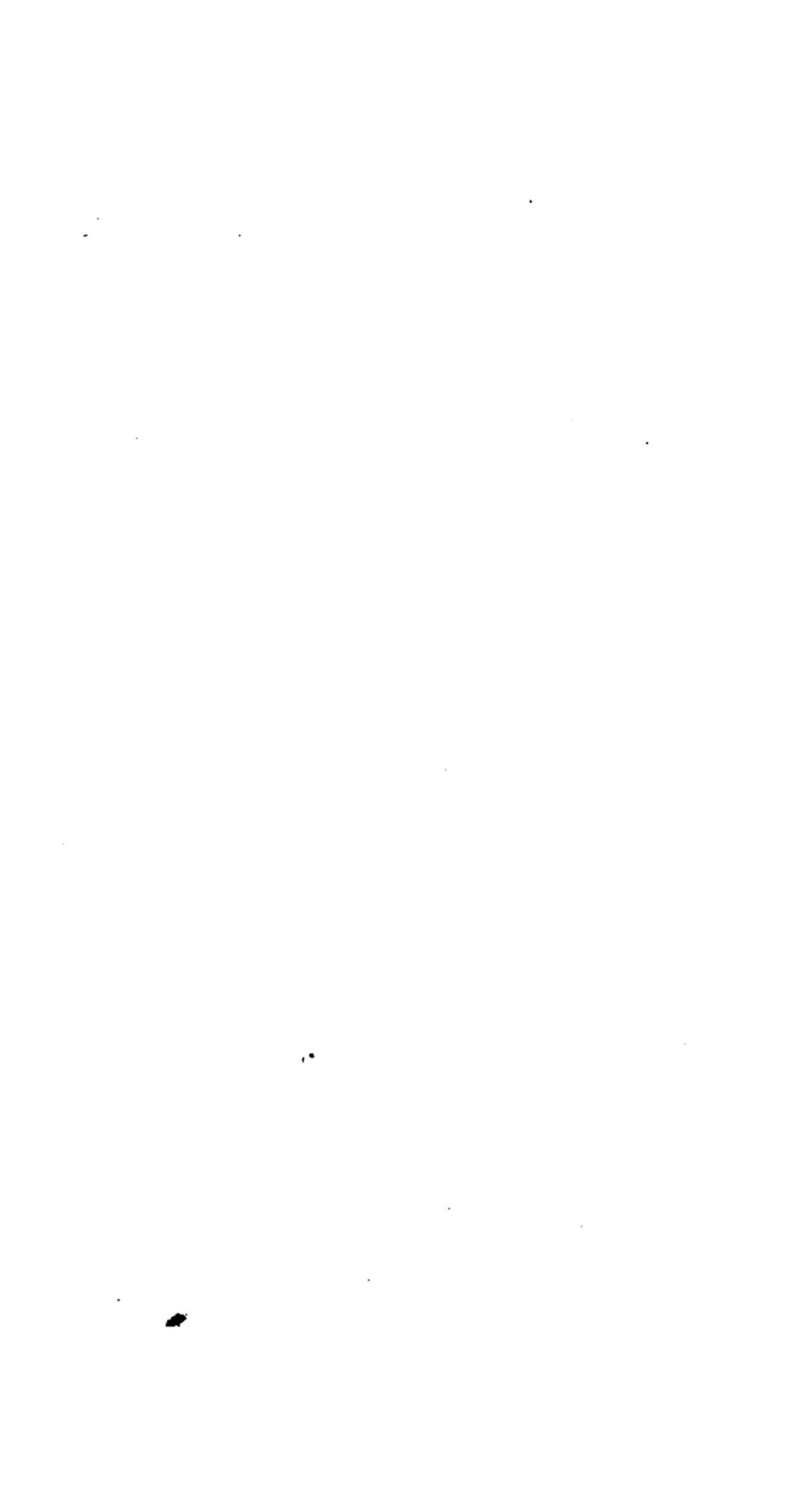
² Eph. iii. 16.

³ Whit-Sunday.

of Christ your Saviour, yet stay not away from the house of prayer on that solemn, and (to you, I trust,) interesting occasion.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen¹.

¹ Jude 24, 25.



PROVISION FOR ETERNITY.

A SERMON

ON ST. MATTHEW, 6. 19, 20.

Preached before the

DUDLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND CLUBS,

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1835.

And before the

SEDGELEY CHURCH FRIENDLY SOCIETY,

MONDAY, JULY 6, 1835.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES GIRDLESTONE, A. M.

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MATTHEW 6. 19, 20.

“LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES UPON EARTH, WHERE MOTH AND RUST DOOTH CORRUPT, AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK THROUGH AND STEAL. BUT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DOTHE CORRUPT, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK THROUGH NOR STEAL.”

THE force of this commandment is to a certain degree comparative. That is to say, our Lord did not so much mean in these words, to forbid our laying up treasure upon earth, as to point out how much better a thing it is to lay up treasure in heaven. We learn from other parts of Scripture that it is well to be diligent and provident. (See Prov. 6. 6, 7, 8. 1 Tim. 5 8.) It is well to work, and to lay by, to day; for this reason amongst others, that we may not be *distracted with anxious thought about to-morrow.*

But it is of infinitely more importance to work and lay by for eternity. However much our happiness may depend on provision against sickness and old age, we are infinitely more concerned to be secured against perishing for ever. And therefore since you all acknowledge the wisdom of laying up some little beforehand upon earth, I shall endeavour now to enforce the importance of laying up in store for yourselves, as St. Paul expresses it, a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life.

(See 1 Tim. 6. 19.)

Now my brethren I grieve to say, that this is one of many instances, in which the children of this world are wiser, as our Lord complains, in their generation, than the children of light in theirs. (See Luke 16. 8.) In your Friendly Society for instance, you pay in whilst young, and strong, and healthy, against the time of sickness and old age. In your Friendly Society you thankfully accept the help of others, who have more to spare than yourselves; and you also cheerfully contribute to each others relief. In your Friendly Society you keep books of all receipts and payments; and you look to it that they are from time to time duly cast up and *balanced*. In your Friendly Society you entrust your property to the hands of those who can

take best care of it, and turn it to the most advantage. In your Friendly Society you manage all things by settled rules or laws ; you have fines and penalties, as well as privileges and benefits ; and you think it no more than reasonable that they who break the rules should lose the advantages which they who keep the rules enjoy.

Now in all this you shew thus far the understanding of men. And though there may be errors in your plan, and mistakes in your calculation, it is evident that you are in earnest in your design of laying up a provision upon the earth. But consider, every one of you, are you as much in earnest, do you apply as much of sense and reason towards laying up treasure in heaven ? Examine yourselves by comparison in these several particulars which have now been mentioned. And remember you ought to be much more in earnest. You ought to feel much more anxiously, to labour much more diligently ; as much more, as heavenly treasure is better than earthly treasure ; as much more, as is implied in our Saviour's saying, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

And now to begin our comparison. In your Friendly Society you pay in whilst you are well able to work, in order that you may

draw out when you are too ill to get wages. I suppose that every one of you can at once apply this principle to the case of treasure in heaven. In our spiritual business you must all be well aware, that "the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9. 4.) Death cannot be delayed, will not be refused, must have his prey. Are you making any provision against the day when this implacable enemy shall bear you off to "the house appointed for all living?" (Job 30. 23.) Remember, now is the time for working, now is the time for laying up in store. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," for God's glory, and for thy own salvation, do it now with all thy might; "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." (Eccles. 9. 10.)

But again, in your Friendly Society you are glad to have the help of others, who have more to spare than yourselves. Are you aware that in your heavenly provision it is absolutely necessary to have the help of God? Do you sufficiently consider that He is far more ready to give help than you are to ask for assistance? Do you ask for his assistance in faith that you shall obtain it, and with thankfulness when it is obtained? Do you work as if you had any *such help*; thinking of it, leaning on it, profiting *by it*? Oh, consider, my brethren, what great

help it is ! "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me ;" (Phil. 4. 13;) this is the way St. Paul speaks of help from heaven. Is this the way you value it ? Is it in full reliance on such help as this that you undertake to lead a holy life ? Or do you work as if you had no strength besides your own, mere weakness as you know this is ; and therefore work ineffectually because you feel despondingly ?

But besides the help of more wealthy friends, which is peculiar to those clubs that admit Patrons, it is in the nature of all your Societies that you contribute to assist one another. Now this ought also to be the case in your spiritual provision for eternity. Christians must never look upon themselves as solitary servants of the Lord, but as a numerous and united family, as a society of such as love, and are beloved. They help each other by example. They help each other by conference, exhortation, and brotherly admonition. They help each other by joint prayer and praise, and especially by praying for each others improvement. Do you ever thus contribute your prayers, your counsel, your example, to that fund of devotion, faith, and holiness, which helps to spread amongst your brethren peace and joy ? Do you ever feel yourselves refreshed when you are weary, and cheered when sad at heart, by considering that

there are many of your brethren, though you know not always which they be, who are trusting in the same Saviour's blood, and by sharing in the grace given in answer to their prayers, though you cannot even guess whose prayers they are ? If not, it is to be feared that in laying up treasure in heaven you are neglecting that effectual help which comes of the communion of saints, the working together and praying together of all those, who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

But I observe further in your rules that you keep accounts of your receipts and payments ; and that on due occasions you have them properly cast up and balanced. Now this is in order that you may know how you stand in regard to your provision of earthly treasure. For it is universally observed that in order to thrive in worldly wealth, it is needful for a man to be accurate in his accounts. And it is no less true that those who really are thriving, are fond of looking into their books and casting up their gains. Whilst the spendthrift keeps no accounts at all. And the bankrupt if he has any, fears to look into them. Now which of you can say that he keeps account of heavenly treasure ? Which finds that he takes delight in searching *and examining* into the condition of his soul ? *When did you last take the pains to ask your-*

selves questions such as these following: What must I do to be saved? How many have been my sins? Has my repentance been sincere? Am I, or am I not, in the faith? Has Christ as far as I am concerned died in vain? or have I ground to think that I am one with Him, and He one with me, that I am his, and shall be his for ever?

My brethren, whether you look into these things or no, they are noted in a book. And the account must one day be cast up. God has his reckoning day. And whether you will examine yourselves or not, He will surely bring you to judgment. Thus it is that the reckoning is described in Scripture: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. 20. 12.) Oh, my brethren, what books are these to think of! How frequently ought you to be casting up beforehand the reckoning which you must then go through in the presence of your Judge! How thankful should I be to think, that the word now spoken might but prevail on any one of you, to ask himself in earnest this single question, *How stands my account with God?*

But think not that you can be justified in his sight, by the worth of any works which here you do. No; there is One who has made an atonement for your souls; and it is to Him, even to Christ that you must commit your cause. It is to Him that you must trust all you have; to Him look for all you hope for. And here again your own rules seem to shew that some such confidence is not thought by you unreasonable, in your provision of treasure upon earth. You entrust what you lay by, to the hands of others, for them to take care of it, and repay it with interest. And it is in allusion to such a proceeding as this, that St. Paul thus expresses his reliance on Christ our Saviour: "I know whom I have believed," or as it is written in the margin, have "trusted," "and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1. 12.) Now is it thus that you are trusting? Have you this persuasion in your minds? In one word, Do you thus believe? Whatsoever treasure you may think that you have laid up in heaven, do you place all as in your Saviour's hands, under the full conviction, that it is only through his merits and mediation that you can possibly meet with acceptance with God?

Christ, and He alone, is, as the apostle writes, *made unto us of God, or by God's ordi-*

nance, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor 1. 30, 31) For this end therefore let us labour, and lay by our gains in heaven, that we may glorify our Saviour Christ. For this let us now deny the flesh, resist the devil, and renounce the world; that we may prove our love for Him, who died to save our souls. Yes, let it be seen in us, my brethren, that our treasure is in heaven by its being manifest that we delight in honouring our Saviour, who is there preparing a place for us. Let us confess that we are disciples of a crucified Redeemer. Let it be said of us with truth; These men do really believe in Christ, and do really for his sake, love to do his will. They look upon Him as having loved them, and given Himself for them. And therefore they give themselves, and all they have to Him. They trust themselves, and all they have, entirely in his hands. They count all things but loss for his sake.

But here I must not fail to warn you, against the prevalent abuse of the doctrines of Gospel grace, as if the mercy of God in Christ Jesus made it safe to continue in sin. Here I must take occasion to remind you, that in your own Society *you manage all things by settled rules; you*

have fines and penalties, as well as privileges and benefits; and you think it neither unjust nor unkind, to punish those who break your rules as well as to reward those who keep them. Now shall man be just, and God unrighteous? Shall it be supposed that God's mercy is inconsistent with his abiding by the laws, which He has Himself laid down? Does not the very same Gospel which proclaims free grace to sinners, also urgently enjoin them to go, and sin no more. (See John 8. 11.) The same new covenant, which ensures pardon on repentance, and provides grace in answer to prayer, which sets forth the blood of Christ as sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world, and the mercy of God as large enough to forgive all mankind, does it not, I ask, also tell us that one great end of the revelation of this mercy is to make us holy? And does it not describe holiness at great length, in all its several particulars, and summing up all in a few short plain rules, require of us no less than this, that we should really love God, and love our neighbour as ourselves?

Now my brethren, remember, you are bound by these rules. Remember if you transgress any one of them, you have a penalty to pay. The *tears of repentance* must be shed. The labour of *amendment* must be diligently fulfilled. If

you sin in ignorance, you must be informed, set right, and so corrected. If you sin knowingly, you must be made aware, that you sin so much the more grievously. If you persist in sinning wilfully, the penalties will be gradually increased, until you lose all privileges, are shut out from all benefits, and to use the language of your own rules, you must be in the end expelled.

Hear now how this matter is set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in reference to a passage in the prophet Jeremiah: "This is the covenant that I will make with them, after those days saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. 10. 16, 17.) Pardon, you see, freely proclaimed! But at the same time obedience required in the heart! And now observe what follows presently afterwards, "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall consume the adversaries." (Ver. 26.) The excellency of the new covenant, the greatness of the gift, the abundance of the mercy, does, you see, aggravate the punishment of transgression, as certainly as it aggravates the sin. *And so the apostle goes on to reason,*

comparing the Gospel with the Law: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorcer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Ver. 28, 29.)

A punishment much sorcer than death! what is this but hell fire? He that hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace! who is this but the wilful sinner? How many such are here? Let them be warned, they are under sentence to perish for ever. By the rules of the Christian Society, they have forfeited the privileges of the Gospel; and when the day of reckoning comes round, they will have all the penalties to pay. O my brethren, let me say to such, as one who is their brother, as a member of the same church, and bound to stand before the same judgment seat of Christ, O my brethren, make haste, whilst it is called to day, make haste, and flee from the wrath to come. Whilst you are making provision against want on earth, much more watch that you are not ruined for eternity. When you *find* that you cannot evade your own rules, contrived by man's wisdom, and enforced by

man's authority ; never be so foolish as to think that you can break with impunity the laws of God, that you can pass for a good Christian in his sight, and receive the benefits of the Gospel at his hand, merely because you say Lord, Lord, without devoting yourselves to do his will. (See Matth. 7. 21.)

No ; God is not to be so mocked. Treasure in heaven cannot be so laid up. The children of light must be as wise in their generation as the children of this world are in theirs. God in his infinite wisdom has laid down the rules by which you may become rich to all eternity. God in his infinite power will abundantly provide, above all that we deserve or desire, for those who live according to the rules He has laid down. And in his infinite justice, God will infallibly punish those, who set at nought his will, and refuse to keep his commandments. He has given us a law which shall not be broken, or if we break it, we must abide by the penalty. He has graciously secured to us advantages infinitely beyond the worth of all that we can ourselves do for heaven. But He has at the same time ordained, that if we do not what we can, we never shall enjoy what we might. His feast is prepared. But there are some whom He will send empty away. The crown of glory He has placed within the reach of all. But there are some

whom He will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed." (Math.25. 41.) Would you know whether you shall then have want or abundance, whether you shall then perish or be saved? Observe, the rule by which you will be judged is the Gospel! Observe, that which will then be judged is your life! May God give you grace so to live on earth, as to be laying up for yourselves treasure in heaven! May God now keep you stedfast in obedience to his righteous laws, and hereafter make you happy for ever in the enjoyment of his gracious promises!

THE END.

DUDLEY :
Printed by Thomas Danke.

A MEMENTO
OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION;
AND
A WARNING
AGAINST THE REVIVAL OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
RELIGION IN ENGLAND.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF OVING,

NEAR CHICHESTER,

Oct. 4th, 1835,

BY

THOMAS AGAR HOLLAND, M. A.

VICAR OF OVING.

“ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.” Ezek. 33. 7.

CHICHESTER :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be well by way of Apology for the appearance of this little publication, to premise: that the same motives which actuated me, in conjunction with my brother Ministers generally throughout the kingdom, to preach upon the subject of the Reformation on the Tercentenary-day of the translation of the Scriptures into

ERRATA.

In Advertisement, for "quoted" read made quotations.

In ditto, after "specified" insert, as such.

In Sermon, page 7, before "other Churches err" insert, any.

In ditto, page 14, for "Edward the 6th" read, Henry the 8th.

In same page after "Bishop of Exeter" insert in the reign of Edward the 6th.

In page 16, after "restrictions and" read, When and where they have influence enough, (their own tardy and garbled Translations forming no exceptions to this rule,) keep, &c. retaining, &c.

In page 20, dele "the defensive mail" and dele "is," and after "armour of God" insert, offensive and defensive, taking in hand *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the WORD of God.* [Eph. 6. and Heb. 4. 12.]



ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be well by way of Apology for the appearance of this little publication, to premise: that the same motives which actuated me, in conjunction with my brother Ministers generally throughout the kingdom, to *preach* upon the subject of the Reformation on the Tercentenary-day of the translation of the Scriptures into English, induce me now to *print* the following Discourse. I do so in the hope, under the blessing of God, of not only keeping my own Parishioners *in mind* of these things, but also of beneficially extending to others some seasonable, and salutary admonitions,—salutary indeed only in as far as they are deduced or deducible from the Book of divine Revelation itself. I doubt not but that most of my Reverend Brethren discharged their high and voluntary office, on the above occasion, more ably and effectually than I have done, and therefore I trust that this publication may suggest to many of them the idea of enlarging the sphere of their usefulness by giving to the world the substance of those simultaneous appeals to the fundamental principles of Protestantism, in a durable and cheap form, for universal dissemination among all classes of the population of the Empire, at this most eventful period.

There happening to be such striking coincidences of subject-matter in almost all the proper Lessons and Psalms for the Day (16th. Sun. after Trin.) with that involved in the great topic of the Commemoration, wherever I have quoted from any of these, the sources of their derivation are particularly specified in the note of reference. The Collect, likewise, appearing so remarkably appropriate, is prefixed, together with that for the 2nd Sunday in Advent generally made use of before Sermon.

T. A. H.

Vicarage, Oving, Oct. 1835.

COLLECT.

Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning ; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

COLLECT FOR THE DAY.

O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church ; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON.

MARK 7. 7.

[Lesson for the Day]

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

THIS sentence, you will recollect, my brethren, forms part of a quotation from the prophet Isaiah which was applied by Jesus Christ to the scribes and Pharisees. It appears that some members of these the strictest and most formally ceremonious of the sects and orders among the Jews, having observed our Lord's disciples eating bread without having first washed their hands, after their own peculiar custom, expressed their indignant surprise at the omission. "For," the Evangelist tells us, in explanation, "*all the Jews except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.*" And not only themselves did they wash so diligently, but also many vessels, and various other articles of furniture, before they were used, for some select purposes; indicating thereby the uncleanness which the persons or things were supposed to have contracted in the ordinary occupations of life. These Jewish doctors, then, could not understand how the followers of one professing to be a teacher

of religion and morality, could neglect the obser-
ance of what they esteemed a religious duty ; and
they ventured to challenge the Master himself on
this head, enquiring of him : “ *why walk not thy
disciples according to the tradition of the elders,
but eat bread with unwashen hands?* ” To which
question “ *He answered and said unto them : well
hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is
written : ‘ this people honoureth me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me ; Howbeit in vain
do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the
commandments of men.’* ” In this reply, and in the
context, Jesus intimates that those scrupulous cere-
monies of ablution to which they alluded, together
with others of a like nature, not being commanded
by God, but being merely the superfluous and unne-
cessary adjuncts of men, were not only not binding
or efficacious in themselves, but, on the contrary,
were positively injurious : for these, and other such
like things inculcated in their traditions, actually
thwarted the object of God’s commandments, and
rendered his divine Word of none effect. Now, these
traditions were certain unwritten institutions and
regulations of man’s device, which, transmitted
down from age to age, by word of mouth, and by
continuous observance, had become mixed up with
the doctrines of the Scriptures, and regarded as of
equal efficacy with them. Nay, more, for things
had come to such a pass, that the commandments
of God were rejected, and laid aside, and the com-
mandments of men were preferred, and made to
supersede them. No wonder, then, that the Sa-
viour of the world denounced the religion of the

scribes and Pharisees, and in the name of his Father, and with the concurrence of the Holy Ghost, disclaimed their worship :—“ *Bring no more vain oblations*” saith the Spirit, in like manner, in the first chapter of Isaiah, “ *it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.*” No wonder, too, that he poured forth against the same class of sanctimonious pretenders, that series of dire anathemas which we find recorded in Matthew 23 : “ *Woe unto you hypocrites, ye fools, ye blind guides, ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?*”

But, let me ask, my brethren, have such erroneous tenets and practices as those we are now considering been confined to the members of the Jewish Church ; and are such awful judgments due only unto them ? All the Visible Churches, being in great measure, in their external frame-work, of human contrivance and adaptation ; (although that of the Jews was less so than any other, being originally fashioned after the pattern given by God himself,) and all being sustained through the instrumentality of human means, as secondary causes, are liable to become corrupted by human depravity, and infirmity, and stand in need of continual purgation and refinement, yea, “ *every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*” [John, 15.] The Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and others have erred, as our 19th Article affirms : so, therefore, it is evident, may other Churches err. And what does our own History inform us ? Indeed, we must confess that the Christian and Apostolical Church here in

England, furnishes an apposite example of this. But, narrowing our enquiry to the single subject under examination, it is too true that if our Church is now *comparatively* free from such base alloys as those represented in the text, it was once entirely overlaid and corroded by them.

No one, I think, my brethren, who has perused with attention the Sacred Volume, and who has studied the various forms which Religious Profession has assumed in the world, can fail to recognise in the passage before us, besides its application to the Jews of our Lord's time, a striking description, and a concomitant rebuke, of the characteristic precepts and practices of one remarkable sect of religionists which began to incorporate itself about 600 years after Christ, and subsists to the present day. I need hardly explain that I mean the *Roman Catholics*. This body of Christians arrogate to their form of faith, the lofty and exclusive title of being the sole and universal Church of God, out of whose holy pale (or enclosure) none (they say) can be saved. They hold that their Church is infallible, (that is not subject to error) and that her *traditions*, which they affirm to have been derived directly from Christ and his Apostles, are not only of equivalent, but, under certain circumstances, of *more* authority than the words of holy Writ. They rely upon the efficacy of their own good works to merit eternal life. They set up their Church as the supreme judge of the Scripture, instead of acknowledging the Scripture to be the judge paramount of the *Church*. In these prominent features, surely, the *Roman Catholics* exactly resemble the scribes

and Pharisees; and equally *vain* must their worship be esteemed in the sight of God and his Christ, for God "*is a spirit*," and "*a jealous God*," and "*they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*." Not that the religious system of the Romanists is in all its constituent elements a *wrong* one, but its good is adulterated and marred by much adventitious evil. They seem to read the New Testament as the Jews did the Old, "*with a veil upon their heart*," [2 Cor. 3. Lesson for the Day.] Theirs, it is to be feared, are "*Prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies; seducing God's people, saying peace where there is no peace*;" guaranteeing remission from guilt where the Gospel offers it not: building, upon an insecure foundation, because other than that of Christ *alone*, a flimsy structure, composed albeit of several "*lively*" Gospel "*stones*," but badly cemented together, because not with Christ's blood and Christ's love only; and then superficially screening its tottering weakness by smooth and flattering persuasions of its solidity. But lo! "*the Lord shall break down the wall, and its foundation shall be discovered, and they that daubed it with untempered mortar shall be consumed in the midst thereof*." [Ezek. 13. Lesson for the Day.] Now, with this application of the text, we, my brethren, are ourselves deeply concerned. For, the Roman Catholic, you know, was once the adopted Church of this Country, and held absolute sway in the realm for several centuries: until a small band of our learned and godly forefathers, about 300 years ago, revolting from her unscriptural *doctrines and degrading superstitions*, bravely, nobly,

at the peril of their lives, and, under the blessing of Almighty God, successfully, roused up the whole people to a sense of their ignominious vassalage to the See of Rome, and eventually freed the nation, and set us their posterity free from her thralldom. For this great deliverance, not inferior to that of the Israelites out of Egypt, we cannot be too thankful, but should ever be ready to sing, like Moses and his people, a hymn of gratitude that herein "*the Lord hath triumphed gloriously.*" And let us take care, lest, by neglecting occasionally or periodically to recal the memory of this important event, we, like them, after a while, forget our deliverance, and becoming disobedient as "*at the sea, even at the Red sea,*" provoke his wrathful indignation to destroy us. It is to be feared however, my brethren, that we have hitherto been culpably remiss in these respects, notwithstanding. Perhaps the Clergy should take to themselves some especial reproach for (using as they supposed a salutary discretion) having omitted to preach, as they are required by law, once every quarter at least, upon the errors of the Church of Rome. For, not only is there evinced in the public mind a general want of due appreciation of the blessings which have accrued to our country, and to ourselves individually through means of the *Reformation*, but, astonishing and incredible as it may appear to some, again, is that formerly vanquished Superstition lifting up her head among us; she is daily recruiting her ranks with English proselytes, making rapid advances to influence and power, and threatening to regain her ascendancy over the Island.

Actuated, then, by these two motives combined, viz. awakened gratitude for the past, and strong apprehension for the future, a large and piously disposed body both of Laity and Clergy throughout Great Britain, and in parts of Ireland, have resolved to set apart *this* day for celebrating the goodly era of the Reformation by a spontaneous Jubilee, a religious Festival of prayer and praise. In many Churches money will be collected, on this occasion, for the purpose of counteracting the deep-laid designs, and restless agency of Popery; either by means of sending out Scripture-readers, or by circulating appropriate books and tracts; and in some instances for relieving the distresses of the Clergy of the established Church in Ireland: “troubled” as they are “*on every side*,” and *persecuted, and perplexed*,” yet “*not*” utterly “*forsaken*” or “*despairing*.” [2. Cor. 4.] It is not, however, my intention, for several considerations, to propose any such collection among you, my brethren, to day.—The Clergy, and the Ministers of various denominations of *Dissenters*, likewise, on their part, have undertaken to remind those of their hearers who know these things, and to explain to others who may not know them, what is the real character of the Roman Catholic Church, and what is the meaning of the name they themselves bear as *Protestants*, and to point out to them what are the consequent obligations attached to it; warning *all* to be upon their guard, because Rome, it is well ascertained, is at this present moment directing *her ecclesiastical artillery to bear England*; sending forth numerous preac

this her favorite **Mission**, and supplying unlimited funds in aid of her cause. Yes, my brethren, I deem it *my* duty to apprise *you* that Popery *has* gained a footing in our country. Here, we observe her insinuating herself with the stealthy pace, and modest mien of a "*persecuted*" Minister of "*the Antient and True Religion*," as she calls Satan's master-piece of plausible iniquity; there, where she can more safely display her genuine character, marching boldly forward with the rampant port of pontifical assumption, setting at defiance the laws of man where they impede her progress, and contravening, at her pleasure, the ordinances of God.

I am aware that in a quiet rural village like this, where no Romanist has perhaps yet set foot, these anticipations of danger may appear exaggerated and groundless; but it is a very different matter in the large towns, and the districts adjoining them, in the North and centre of England: in those parts, multitudes, comprising sometimes whole villages, *have already* been perverted to Romanism, upon the erection of Roman Catholic Chapels in neighbourhoods where no single Romanist was before to be found. The misguided people have been attracted by the seductive sorceries of the Romish mode of worship, consisting of magnificent spectacles, and pompous processions, enhanced and set off by the most bewitching music; and they have been further allured by the easy and flattering terms upon which the Priests have offered them salvation. But the prime promoting *causes* of the success of all these machinations have been, the ignorance of the poorer sort of people as to the real nature of the difference between the

Protestant and Romish Churches, together with the apathy, and the false and fatal *liberality* of the wealthier classes, who have even, in many instances, lent a helping hand to restore that monstrous system of intolerance and tyranny which their forefathers died to exterminate. Oh! that they who begin to waver in their constancy to the principles of Protestantism and of Christianity, would refer to the neglected records of past times! Let them review the noble army of British Martyrs. Let them read by the still "unextinguished light" which Latimer and Ridley enkindled in their own persons, lessons of caution and encouragement. But let them chiefly listen again to the most impressive Sermon ever preached by metropolitan prelate, when Cranmer girt with robes of flame, stretched forth the offending member of his own flesh, the instrument of his repented apostasy, and with double emphasis, and with double efficiency cried out, while it was consuming: "that unworthy hand! that unworthy hand!"

That Popery *will* regain a temporary ascendancy, in the world, before her final overthrow, is the opinion of many wise and pious men. But who, a few years ago, could bring himself to believe the possibility of enlightened England ever becoming again the scene of Romish triumph? The public events, however, religious, and political, of the last few years have indicated (I think,) its *possibility*, if not, as some even apprehend, its *probability*. "*There must be HERESIES among you,*" says St. Paul, "*that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*" [1 Cor. 11. 19.] Nevertheless, though "*it needs must be that offences*

come, woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

[Matt. 18.7.] Seeing, then that a preventive is always more eligible than a cure, it is better to be too early in the field than too late. What would not the sincere Protestants of the counties of Lancaster, and York, and Leicester, have given to have been forewarned of the gradual increase of the disciples of Rome among them, before they came up, suddenly, as it appeared, and surrounded them, like a flood. Let us take a lesson of zeal and activity, at least, from the Romanists.

This present day is fixed upon to commemorate the Reformation, because on the 4th. of October A.D. 1535, in the reign of King Edward the 6th. the first entire English Protestant version of the BIBLE was printed, and allowed by Royal Authority. It was translated from the original languages by Myles Coverdale, afterwards Bishop of Exeter. Before that period there were but few copies of the Scriptures in the kingdom, and those few were in dead languages not understood by the people at large, and they were in the hands of the Priests only, who would scarcely allow the people to know any thing of their contents; as indeed they never do wherever their religion prevails. The printing therefore of the first English Bible seems a very appropriate epoch, whence to date the rise of the Reformed or Protestant religion in England.

Our time will not permit me to-day, to enter into any thing like an analysis or sketch of the whole *system of Romanism*, for the purpose of shewing its *general contrariety to Scripture*: this object I may be induced to pursue in detail on future occasions;

but I will in the remainder of this discourse, direct your attention to those topics which are most prominently suggested by the words of the text, applying them as we go on to the particular subject which I have introduced to your notice. And this will suffice for our present purpose, as the doctrine of the authority of *tradition* being co-ordinate with that of Scripture, whereby the Roman Catholics attempt to justify many of their deviations from that sacred standard of faith and practice, comprises the principal characteristics of their system. It would be well however before we proceed further, to give an exact definition of those names which I have already used so often,—the names by which the two churches in question are distinguished. The *Roman* or *Romish* Church is so called because the See (or seat) of her chieft Bishop and spiritual Sovereign, the Pope, is at Rome. She calls herself *Catholic* to signify her pretended *universality*. The term *Protestant* (in its broad and general meaning, though its origin was of a more particular and limited import,) implies that we *protested*, and *do protest* against all the *unscriptural* dogmas of the Church of Rome. Now, let no one for a moment suppose, as the Romanists assert, that the Protestant, is a *New Church*, only 300 years old, or that she maintains any one single new doctrine; this is far from the fact; our Church is founded “*upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;*” [Eph.-2. 20.] and all our doctrines are derived from the *Word of God*. There was a Christian Church in *Britain* long before the monk Augustine was sent

by the Pope, in the seventh century, to convert the pagan Saxons to Christianity, and to make the British Christians conform to the Roman creed and discipline ; and the British Bishops successfully resisted the invasion of their independence for some time. But at length Rome's wily policy prevailed, and she imposed her iron yoke upon the neck of prostrate Britain. For nearly 800 years did the benighted people of this land travail in thick darkness, until the dawning light of there-opening Gospel gradually pierced the clouds, from the time of Wickliffe in the 14th. to the middle of the 16th. centuries, when, by the exertions of Luther in Germany, Cranmer in England, and their contemporaries, and principally by means of circulating the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, the Protestant Reformation in Europe was consummated.

The Roman Priests are always against the circulation of the Bible, for this simple reason : that the Bible is against them. Their pompous rites, their idolatries, their superstitions, their *traditions*, are, I was going to say, *not* to be found in that blessed Book ; but in fact they *are* there, for they are actually predicted, (as in the text,) by name, and denounced with the heaviest judgements of Almighty God. This then is the obvious reason why they clasp its sacred pages with prohibitive restrictions, and, keeping the lock of a dead language upon it, retain the key in their own possession.

It is a common and just observation that the *very frequency* and regularity of some of the best *gifts of God* render our minds callous to their full *value* ; and it is only by their partial or entire *removal* that we begin to appreciate their real worth.

So is it with the sacred Volume itself. *We* have never been deprived of the opportunity of consulting it when we pleased, and therefore are perhaps scarcely sensible of the cruelty of that deprivation. Let us pause, nevertheless, my brethren, and ponder upon these things. Turn your eyes to the Bible in your hands. You who lean your whole hope upon its precious promises; who acknowledge the transcendent excellence of its precepts; who, increasing in a lively and a stedfast faith shew forth the genuine fruits of that faith in the increasing godliness of your lives: you to whom the Sabbath is especially delightful, when, disburdened, for the while, of the cares and toils of worldly occupations, you can wait upon the Lord in the public worship of his holy Temple during the day, and at evening sit down by the hearth of your home, and hold uninterrupted converse with your Maker, through the medium of his revealed Word; wherein you find that "*the law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul,*" that "*the statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart,*" that "*the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light to the eyes,*" and that "*His judgments are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb;* [Psalm (19.) for the Day.] wherein, too, you can contemplate the noble works which the Lord did in the days of your Fathers of the early Christian Church, and what He did likewise toward your spiritual ancestors in Israel, in the old time before them; and wherein you can, moreover, by the lamp of inspired Prophecy look toward, and foresee,—

clearly enough, at least, to forewarn you—"what must be hereafter," reading "what the Spirit saith unto the Churches" in that sublime and mysterious Revelation with which the Scripture closes, and of which the Holy Spirit predicates: "*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein:*" do you, I say, consider for a moment; how would you like that blessed Book to be snatched from your hands, to see it destroyed before your eyes, and to be subjected to a severe punishment for harbouring it in your dwelling? Yet, extravagant as may seem this question, this *was* the case once in England, this *is* the case still throughout a great portion of Europe, yea, this *is* the case *now* in unhappy Ireland; and this may be your own case again, if you do not, as I venture to exhort you, watch.

Look, my brethren, across the narrow sea, and compare the miserable condition of Ireland, with the prosperity of Great Britain; and learn from the details of the comparison, that the contrast discernible between these sister islands, mainly arises from the prevalence there of a false, because an anti-scriptural, and here of a true, because a scriptural, Religion. *There*, indeed, does the Church of Rome, of whom Scripture speaks in tones of thunder, revel in unrestrained licentiousness, trafficking in the "*merchandise of the souls of men,*" and is literally *drunken with the Blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,*"—the murdered ministers, and other faithful professors of his *Gospel*. Now if any one wonders at this, as St. John

did when he saw the vision of it in his revelation, let him recollect the reproving rejoinder of the Angel who shewed it him : “ *Wherfore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the Woman.*” That by the *Woman*, is here meant the Church of Rome, has been the conviction of all the Protestant Reformers, and a perusal of the 17th and other chapters of St. John’s Revelation, must satisfy every candid enquirer, upon that point : and therefore the flagitious appellations with which her forehead is branded, are printed in large letters in our Bibles, in order to attract the reader’s attention to the heinousness of her crimes, and the danger of communion with her. Therein, moreover, are depicted the horrible calamities that shall at last overtake this “ *mystery of iniquity ;*” and none we are told, shall wonder then but those “ *whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.*” [Rev. 17.] “ *If any man have an ear, saith the Spirit, let him hear.*” [Rev. 13.]

Such, my brethren, we believe to be the nature of the corrupt and apostate branch of Christ’s Visible Church, from whose communion we separated ourselves at the time of the Reformation. We did, then, but obey that *other* voice from Heaven heard beforehand by St. John : “ *Come out of her, MY PEOPLE, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*” Nay the Divine Word goes even further and says : (in the spirit of prophecy, however, rather than of command,) “ *Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works.*”

[Rev. 18.] But bear in mind, my brethren, that “*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal*” [2 Cor. 10.] but spiritual ; and the defensive mail we are to put on is “*the whole armour of God*.” Ought any of us then, now, through any false delicacy, or spurious liberality, to shrink from stating how we, under the promised teaching of the Holy Spirit, and availing ourselves of the concurrent interpretation of the learned and godly fathers of our Church, understand the Scripture in our hands, “*all*” of which is “*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, in righteousness.*” [2. Tim. 3.] At any rate, we, the Pastors of the flock, must speak the words of Him whose ambassadors we are, “*whether you will hear or whether you will forbear,*” although “*the Roll of the book spread before us,*” at particular seasons, be “*written within and without : lamentation, and mourning, and woe.*” [Ezek. 2. Lesson for the Day.] Yea, we are determined at this first though distant alarm, before the enemy’s footsteps are heard at our doors, to mount the watch-towers, and “*blow the trumpet, and warn the people.*” [Ezek. 33.]

Finally; my brethren, while we rejoice in having purified our National Religion, and reformed our National Church, let us examine ourselves whether we have made a right use of “*the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.*” Let us individually prove our hearts, to discover whether any leaven of *Pharisaic formality*, or of Romish superstition, is yet *lurking there* : whether we compromise any positive *religious obligation* upon the specious but futile plea

of “*Corban* ;” [Mark, 7. Lesson for the Day.] or whether we trust to the merit of our own works for acceptance with God. If we *may* take the Bible as “*a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths,*” do we avail ourselves of that privilege? Is there a house without a Bible any where in our quarters? Is there a Bible in any house unread? If there be such instances, what have those godless inhabitants profited by the Reformation? and if they have not profited by this great national boon, much will they have to answer for hereafter; for, “*unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.*” “*How shall they escape if they neglect so great Salvation?*” They will be totally without excuse, for it may truly be said of every one of us: “*The Commandment of the Lord thy God is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off; but the Word is very nigh unto thee,*” most probably “*in thy mouth,*” and it is to be hoped “*in thy heart,*” also, *that thou mayest do it.*” [Deut. 30.] But you who possess and value the Word of God, are you sure that you *add not* any thing to it, nor *take any thing away* from it, by mental bias, or self-interested reservation? To either and both of these acts of presumption, is affixed the curse of the Almighty. If you add not other mediators to “*the ONE Mediator between God and men the man Christ Jesus,*” take care that you do not, on the other hand, abstract from the Saviour the essential qualifications for that office, contained in his *divinity* conjoined with his *humanity.* He is the “*Word of God,*” who “*in the beginning was with God,*” and who “*was God;*” “*the root and offspring of David, and the bright*

and morning star." And "ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

[2. Cor. 3. Lesson for the Day.]

Brethren, to whatever denomination of Christianity we belong, we expect the great day of righteous Judgment: are we preparing to meet to our God at the dread summons, according to the best light we have? Let that question, and the reflections flowing from it extinguish all hostile and uncharitable feeling towards the persons of those who differ from us in opinion, and generate a sympathetic love for their souls, as of fellow sinners; while, nevertheless, we evince uncompromising hostility to their religious errors when proved to be such by the testimony of Scripture. "*Of some, says St. Jude, have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.*"

Observe, my brethren, when the Angel had delivered his Revelation to St. John which he bade the Apostle write in a book, he said unto him, as we read in the last chapter of the Bible: "**SEAL NOT the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand, and behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be; I am the ALPHA and the OMEGA the beginning and the end, the first and the last;**" and added: "**blessed are they that do his commandments.**" Let all, then, who hear the voice of God in the Scriptures calling them, say, "**with the Holy Spirit, and with the**

Bride (which is the Church of Christ,) *come* ; and let him that is athirst (for the knowlege and fruition of Christ) *say come* ; and whosoever will let him take of the water of life (which is conveyed to him through the unobstructed channel of the Word of God,) *freely.*” So, “*shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the Sea.*” But read once more, my brethren, before you close the sacred Book: *Jesus which testifieth these things* repeats: “*SURELY I come quickly.*” Let then the general chorus of all who profess themselves members of Christ’s holy Catholic Church militant here in earth, and especially ourselves who belong to that highly favoured branch of it, the Protestant Church of England, devoutly respond, while with heart-felt gratitude we meditate upon the concluding page of our rescued BIBLE: “*Amen. even so, come, Lord Jesus !*”

“*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen !*”

THE END.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BY

THE RIGHT REV. GEORGE HENRY,

BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS,

ON SUNDAY, JULY 12TH, 1835,

AT THE PARISH CHURCH OF

ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE,

IN AID OF

The Royal Dispensary for Diseases of the Ear,

AND THE DEAF AND DUMB,

DEAN STREET, SOHO SQUARE.

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1835.



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TO THE
PATRONS, PATRONESSES,
PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS,

AND

GOVERNORS

OF THE

Royal Dispensary for Diseases of the Ear,

AND

THE DEAF AND DUMB,

THE FOLLOWING SERMON

Is inscribed

BY THEIR OBEDIENT,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

GEORGE HENRY BATH AND WELLS.

*Palace, Wells,
Sept. 12th, 1835.*

A SERMON.

LUKE, xiv. 14.

compense thee ; but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

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and, what is of far greater impor-
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luxury which exceeds all bounds
the decay or extinction of many
Christianity is still left to find
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A SERMON.

LUKE, xiv. 14.

They cannot recompense thee ; but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

THERE are few obligations more generally allowed ; and, what is of far greater importance, there are few more generally practised, than those, which have for their object the relief of the suffering part of the community. Amidst a too prevailing corruption of manners —amidst a luxury which exceeds all bounds —amidst the decay or extinction of many sterner virtues, Charity is still left to plead our cause with an offended God, and to lead us onward in the road to heaven. Almost every argument and every principle which can be adduced in the recommendation of any duty, all concur in enforcing the

B

practice of charity. If we retire into our own breasts, and examine the perceptions which are passing there, we find our compassion so powerfully excited by cases of distress and misfortune; so cordial, so unmixed a delight in affording ease and consolation to the distressed, that we cannot for a moment doubt, either concerning the reality of the feeling, which we call pity, or, concerning the final cause for which that feeling was implanted in our mind.

If from our own breast we carry abroad our observations into the actual state of human society, we are soon led to acknowledge, that those things which all desire, but which all cannot obtain,—that these must be regulated by some fixed rule of distribution, by stern unbending laws. Peace and order could not otherwise be maintained among men. Did not therefore Charity step in to supply the imperfection, and to soften the rigour of these laws, instances would continually occur of hardships extreme and hopeless; of virtuous

and useful members of society sinking under the pressure of calamities—calamities, which they had in no degree merited, and from which they had not the means of escaping.

And these, the feelings of our nature, as well as the deductions of our reason, are all abundantly confirmed, and strengthened, by the word of revelation. Almost every page of Scripture declares, “Whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” All claim, then, you see, to a religious character, all pretensions to piety and zeal, without this test, are nothing worth. Benevolence and humanity are the characteristics of our religion. By this, and by this greatly, do we shew, that we are Christ’s disciples, if we love one another.

But it is unnecessary for me to stop and point out more at large to this audience, how frequently and how powerfully the Scriptures incite us all, to the practice of benevolence. I know not, therefore, how I

can more effectually promote the important purpose for which we are now assembled together, than by previously defining the boundaries of charity; and, then, by clearly laying before you those strong and peculiar calls, which the present Institution for relieving the privations of the Deaf and Dumb holds out, to your continued, and, I should hope, to your increased patronage and support.

There is scarcely a virtue which man is enjoined to practise, that does not require some caution and deliberation. By the neglect of these, even virtue itself becomes liable to perversion and abuse. And this, which is true of almost all the virtues, will apply with peculiar propriety to that duty which we are now considering. Charity itself, in the exercise of it, requires judgment and foresight, in order that it may fully answer the end it has in view;—that it may produce the greatest possible sum of human happiness and virtue.

Now this virtue hath, as we think, ex-

ceeded its limits, when it has been recommended to our notice, as hath sometimes, and of late, been the case, without any restraints or preference; when it has sought to embrace within its grasp the whole human race, neglecting, or at least less regarding, the first and nearer ties of friends, of kindred, and home. Universal and undistinguishing philanthropy, was the favourite theory of a neighbouring nation, at the very time when its scaffolds were streaming with blood—with the blood of an amiable and benevolent monarch, and when an infuriated people were spreading abroad misery and war. Such doctrines, however, receive no countenance from the religion of Jesus Christ. We are commanded, indeed, to “do good unto all men,” but, it is added, “especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” Every precept which relates to the duty of charity, is of a useful, practical nature; founded on a thorough knowledge of the wants and constitution of man. Hence we are enjoined to direct

our efforts and assistance principally, and in the first instance, unto them, upon whom such kindness would be most operative—upon relations, friends, and countrymen. The well-being and happiness of society would necessarily be diminished, if benevolence, overlooking the nearer objects, should extend its view to the more distant ones: if, for instance, the father, regarding the whole world as his family, should neglect that part of it which is more peculiarly connected with and dependent upon himself; if, in like manner, the citizen, considering different states as one great community, should forget the more urgent claims of his own country.

In perfect unison with the doctrine we have laid down, were the precepts, and the example, of our blessed Lord and Master. His religion was offered to the Jew first, and then unto the Gentile. He lamented with the tenderest affection over the fate of Jerusalem; and when he visited the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus wept. Even in

his last agony the Saviour shewed himself alive to the feelings of kindred, testifying the kindness with which a parent should be honoured, and, at the same time, proving his regard for a beloved disciple and friend.

And here let it not be supposed, that we are thus limiting and diminishing the influence of that primary virtue, Charity, the exercise of which is one of the peculiar and distinguishing tenets of the Christian religion. We wish merely to ground this duty upon its true basis, and to point out its proper line and gradations : in order that benevolence may be rendered most extensively beneficial.

To attain this end, we should, in the first place, consider our nearer ties ; though we afterwards extend our views to the whole human race. Like the circles which a pebble produces on a lake, and which, emanating from one common centre, by degrees expand themselves further and wider ; so also Christian charity, at first

embraces kindred, home, and country, till the last circle is bounded by no other horizon, than that of the world itself.

In perfect accordance, then, with this, the true spirit of Christian charity, are we now, I hope, assembled together, to consider and relieve the necessities of those our less fortunate brethren, who, by the inscrutable will of the Almighty, are deprived of the important faculty of hearing.

Among the many misfortunes to which human nature (for the wisest reasons, no doubt) is subjected, the want of, or a weakness in, the faculty of hearing is, doubtless, one of the most afflicting. Children who are born deaf, or who have become so, are unable, in such a state, if left to themselves, to obtain, from the faculties that remain to them, any considerable comfort or advantage. They are, in a manner, dead to themselves and to the world; they can take no interest in the active scenes which are passing around them: though belonging to the community, they are separated from it. Though

surrounded by objects busy and delighted, *they* are placed in a separate and insulated situation—in a condition of ignorance and dependence, strangers to all the privileges and enjoyments of their fellow-citizens.

Let us, then, as now called upon to do, take a nearer and more distinct view of the melancholy lot of these, the children of misfortune.

One of the greatest privations of our nature, is the incapacity to communicate what is passing in our minds. The social qualities of man are among the principal characteristics of his nature. He is the only being, on the face of the earth, who is capable of enjoying, in any great extent, a communication of sentiment with the rest of his kind. Never can we be sufficiently thankful for this distinguished blessing; for, the happiness and the comfort of existence depend greatly upon it. Even the pleasures of life would be stripped of half their charm if there were no friend to partake of them with us.

How cheerless and how useless would be the light of knowledge itself, if its rays were incommunicable ! We are indebted not only for the perfection, but even for the capacity of knowledge, to that facility of intercourse which darts from soul to soul. And if the social faculty be of such importance to the pleasures of life, what must it be to the calamities to which human nature is subject ! How dark, how mournful, would be the day of calamity, if there were none to whom we could open and unbosom our sorrows ! The consoling accents of friendship shed a balm over every wound ; whilst the exercise of compassion and love is no less grateful to those who administer them. Without the organs of speech and hearing, affliction must be undiscovered, and the load of evil irremovable, because unknown. We, indeed, by the blessing of Heaven, do enjoy these social advantages to their full extent ; but, surely this ought to be the very reason, why we should pity those to whom they are denied.

If your own selves are happily exempt from this calamity, if your own intercourse in life has not presented to your view a fellow-creature whose ears have never been unstopped, yet the calamity is frequently met with; and if we feel as men and as brethren, we surely are called upon to take a lively and practical interest in the restoration or relief of them, whom Providence has thus afflicted.

In the next place, the deaf, unless they have the advantage of peculiar discipline, can contribute little, if any thing, to their own subsistence, or to the welfare of mankind. They may indeed be taught, by servile imitation, to labour in the lowest employments; but seldom can they be elevated to any one of those higher employments, which are the pride and the wealth of a civilised community. The treasures of intellectual research are greatly beyond their reach. To enlighten their understandings, even with the most obvious truths, is attended with greater difficulty and trouble

than most of their friends are willing to bestow. And even if their lot be cast in a superior station, in the midst of affluence and ease, their vacant melancholy look throws a shade over all the splendour which may surround them. What, then, shall we think of such objects, placed in the lap of poverty, relying for support on those who find it hard to support themselves; with no friend who has leisure to observe their wants,—deprived of the exterior conveniences of life, and exposed to the unfeeling jests of the pitiless and the profligate! If we could only afford comfort to the sick, a refuge to the houseless, or pecuniary assistance to the child of want, our exertions were but the debt which religion and reason demand from us. But when there is superadded to these claims, the reasonable expectation of more substantial benefits,—the hope of awakening the dormant energies,—the prospect of supplying the deficiencies of nature,—of restoring the faculty of hearing,—who can be indifferent to such a call? who

would not endeavour to console the objects of such severe privations ?

But the greatest of the calamities which are the lot of those who have not the faculty of hearing, still remains to be considered. The deaf and poor, in their natural and unassisted state, are almost, if not entirely, deprived of the greatest of all blessings—the blessing of religion. Surely we must acknowledge that every other privation is as nothing, in comparison with this. And here, let not your good feelings be checked by the common and chilling observation, that such persons are not responsible for the want of that talent which is denied to them. The same objection might be advanced against religious instruction in every instance, and of every kind. The poor, we allow, will be answerable for no more than what they have received ; but are we not to strive to enlighten them ? Are we not to open and prepare their minds for the reception of the Gospel ? and to diffuse the light of heavenly truth wherever its rays

can penetrate? This is a design worthy of the Christian; and it is the very end which this charity is now labouring to accomplish. The more difficult the undertaking, the greater is the support needed. And success has crowned their exertions. It must delight every well-disposed mind to hear that, where it could least be expected, there Christianity has found its way; for the rays of divine knowledge have penetrated even the hopeless chambers of the deaf. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." Even where the inlets to instruction appeared to be indissolubly barred, there, have been opened the glorious prospects of eternity. The unhappy sufferers have hence learned, that the God who made them to differ from their fellow-creatures is a God of mercy; for he has visited them with his favour, he has opened to them the riches of his grace. No longer strangers to his heavenly promises, they now hail Him as their strength and their stay. By such consolations all bodily in-

firmities are soothed and mitigated. They know, also, that they shall rise hereafter with bodies perfect and glorified ; that they shall, then, declare the wonderful goodness of the Almighty, through all the boundless ages of eternity. Can wealth, then, be possibly better employed, than in raising our fellow-creatures from a state as it were of death, that Christ may give them light ?

It is not, however, easy to conceive the misery of a situation which we never knew, nor, I hope, are ever likely to experience. But unless we thus abstract our thoughts, and fancy ourselves in the condition of those unhappy beings for whom I am now pleading, it is impossible that we can form an adequate conception of the privations which they endure. Forget, then, for a moment, how graciously the goodness of God has dealt by you. Divest yourselves of that cheerfulness of temper, that interest in the world, which you have now the blessedness to enjoy. Disengage yourselves from that friendly intercourse, which is the

enhancement of your pleasures, and the solace of all your woe. Instead of that active and happy employment, by which you provide for the subsistence of yourselves and others, let all the comforts of independence vanish from your minds. Exchange also the illumination of reason for an universal blank. Suppose yourselves a weight upon your friends, and dwelling in the dull and sombre mansions of indigence. Part, too, with that blessed inward confidence in the Divine Providence, which now fills your breasts with satisfaction and peace. Give up also your trust and your hopes through Jesus Christ, — hopes, that have led your footsteps into the paths of peace, and smoothed the bed of sickness and of pain. Renounce all this, and what then would be your state? What? but the very situation for which we are now soliciting your compassion and aid! If, while labouring under such a malady, corporeal and mental, you could be made sensible of a cure, what would you not sacrifice for

its attainment? How could you sufficiently express your obligation and gratitude to him, who could bring you out of this valley of the shadow of death? If these would be your feelings, recollect that Jesus Christ has delivered this as a main command, and proof of our obedience, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And, thanks to Almighty God, the hearts of the benevolent have been opened to their prayers; those, we well know, who are in the very highest stations of life, have thought it no degradation of their rank to testify their warmest feelings for the afflicted and deaf. Some years since it would not have been believed, that a child who was born deaf, and consequently dumb, could have obtained the faculties of hearing and speech. Such, however, as we know, and have ourselves seen, is one of the happy effects of this Christian institution. Through its labours and assistance, the charms of social life have reappeared; the powers of industry have been called into action; the treasures of know-

ledge have been communicated to the unfortunate; and the Sun of Righteousness hath arisen, with healing on his wings.

From the arguments, then, already adduced, we are justified in believing, that few, if any charities, can advance a stronger claim to your support than the present, for which I am, this day, the willing advocate. Though I would decry no charity whatever, yet may we with fairness observe, that the condition of the blind, so much and so deservedly the objects of your pity, is more tolerable than that of the deaf; for the darkness of the body can never be compared with the darkness of the mind. The alleviations of blindness are more within the reach of all. The blind can receive comfort in the attention of friends and the kindness of neighbours. But when the faculties of hearing and speech are unknown, no relief can be administered without trouble, and patience, and skill;—efforts, attended with an expense, which the poor are totally unable to sustain.

Let me, then, commend our cause to the feelings and the liberality of the present audience. If such meritorious, such unparalleled exertions, be lost, or restrained for want of sufficient encouragement, it will bring a stain, and the first of the sort, upon the British name and character. To succour the infirm, to relieve the distressed, are primary and indispensable duties of a Christian. If we neglect to be charitable, the Saviour of the world has left us in vain example and precept.

But in the culture, and exercise, of this duty, both judgment and caution are required: otherwise, while we imagine we are relieving the indigent, and wiping away the tear of the destitute, we may be upholding imposture, and encouraging idleness. Not that I would throw discouragement on the feelings, or stop one avenue to the human heart; it is better to be often deceived, than to want the disposition of benevolence. But still the duty, as well as the pleasure of alms-giving, must be enhanced by the cer-

tainty, that it is properly and worthily bestowed. And such is the opportunity now before you for the object of your brotherly love; for all that it can bestow. Many, I know, are the appeals which are made to the bounty of the well-disposed. The number, however, of them, thanks be to God, is never the subject of complaint, but of gladness; and our magnificent charitable Institutions are among the greatest blessings which this country enjoys. Favoured as we are pre-eminently by Heaven, it is incumbent on us to be proportionably distinguished by deeds of gratitude and mercy. If no other country surpasses our own in fame, in wealth, in liberty; let it be our care and ambition, to excel them also in the substantial virtue of Christian charity. By evincing on all occasions a desire of removing the distresses, and promoting the comforts of the lower orders, we render not only to them, but to the nation, a most important blessing,—we secure the stability of government,—we give birth to senti-

ments of gratitude and affection ; and by the same means we attain that, which is the end of our being—the approbation and the reward of the Most High.

If these charitable institutions, then, in general, have such a claim on your support, you will not, I am sure, now, deny your assistance to those who suffer under one of the greatest of all misfortunes, the being deprived of the faculty of hearing. Is their affliction trivial ? Is their calamity light ? Alas ! it is one of the greatest bereavements, as we have fully shewn, to which mortality is subject, and such as without the advantage of a public fund can never be adequately relieved. Human nature itself, unenlightened by the Gospel, and ignorant of the will of God, would sympathise with such a calamity, and be unable to withstand the motives to compassion and assistance. How shall we, then, with the law of God written in our hearts, with the heavenly pattern of the Saviour before us, whose whole life was a life of mercy, and whose kingdom is open only to the

merciful and the liberal -- how shall we escape, if such objects as those before us apply in vain? It would be an aggravation even of *their* misery, if the breasts of a Christian audience were shut against them. Such, however, has never been, and we trust never will be, the case.

But on such an occasion, and to this audience, I need not, I am sure, say more. The objects before you have, I hope, already commended themselves to your best feelings; and the fruits, I trust, will appear in your enlarged benevolence. Many have been the occasions, for more than twenty years, which have called us forth in support of the charitable institutions of this metropolis; and gladly have we obeyed the call. We should not, however, do justice to the cause of truth, or to the feelings of gratitude, if we did not add, that in every instance the benevolence of the hearers has more than repaid the anxiety, and the hopes of the preacher.

Let me, then, now dismiss you to the

pleasing discharge of a sacred duty; in the last place, reminding them whose hearts and hands are open to the necessities of these otherwise wretched beings, that a day will come when they who are now deaf will hear your praises, and when the tongue of those who were dumb will plead for you before the throne of God.

The Royal Dispensary for Diseases of the Ear, and the Deaf and Dumb, the only institution in the metropolis having these objects in view, was founded in the year 1816: and it appears that upwards of nine thousand persons afflicted with deafness and other diseases of the ear have been cured or relieved by it. It has thus been the means of very great good to the poor. In consequence of its extensive sphere of true Christian benevolence, but feeling the inadequacy of the present dispensary house, it is the wish and intention of the governors, either to enlarge the present, or to erect a more commodious building, for the reception of deaf and dumb children. This insti-

THE ROYAL
For Diseases of
THE DEAF

DEAN STREET,



DISPENSARY
the Ear and
AND DUMB,

SOHO SQUARE.

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HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF THE BELGIANS.
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.
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Since the establishment of this Charity in 1816, upwards of 9030 patients afflicted with deafness and other diseases of the

Royal Dispensary for Diseases of the Ear.

Ear have been cured or relieved, including several cases of deaf and dumb, as appears by the last Report, April 9th, 1835. As a further proof of its utility, and of its claims on public support, it may be mentioned that above 100 poor patients have received advice and assistance at the Dispensary in one day. From the great success which has crowned the exertions of the Institution, it is the intention of the Governors, as soon as the funds will admit, to enlarge the present, or erect a more commodious building, in order to receive deaf and dumb children into the establishment: for it is a fact of peculiar interest, that the infant deaf and dumb might often be cured, if subjected to an early examination and proper mode of treatment.

Such patients as require acoustic instruments are supplied with them gratuitously.

Every Subscriber of one guinea per annum is entitled to one patient always on the books; two guineas entitle to two patients, and so in proportion; ten guineas constitute a life-governor.

Accidents, and also cases of deaf and dumb, are admitted without letters of recommendation.

Subscriptions are received at the Banking-houses of Sir William Curtis, Bart. and Co. Lombard Street; Messrs. Barclay and Co. Lombard Street; Messrs. Hammersley and Co. Pall Mall; W. Cobbe, Esq. No. 31 Regent Street, Piccadilly; Henry Sheppard Smyth, Esq. at the Dispensary; and by J. H. Curtis, Esq. Surgeon to the Institution, No. 2 Soho Square.

~~etc.~~ *The benevolent views of this Charity are not confined to the inhabitants of the metropolis, but extend to every individual.*

THE
REFORMATION,
NOT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
NEW RELIGION,
BUT THE
CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND DOCTRINES OF THE
BRITISH CHURCH, VINDICATED FROM
ROMISH USURPATION.

A SERMON

PREACHED OCTOBER 4, 1835, THE THIRD CENTENARY OF THE
BIBLE IN THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

BY

THE REV. I. E. N. MOLESWORTH,
RECTOR OF ST. MARTIN WITH ST. PAUL; ONE OF THE SIX PREACHERS
OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL; AND EDITOR OF THE
PENNY SUNDAY READER.

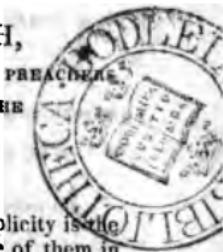
“ He (St. Augustine) found here a plain religion (simplicity is the badge of antiquity,) practised by the Britons; living some of them in the contempt, and many more in the ignorance, of worldly vanities. He brought in a religion, spun with a coarser thread, though guarded with a finer trimming; made luscious to the senses with pleasing ceremonies, so that many who could not judge of the goodness, were courted with the gaudiness thereof. We are indebted to God his goodness in moving Gregory; Gregory’s carefulness in sending Augustine; Augustine’s forwardness in preaching here; but above all, let us bless God’s exceeding great favour, that that doctrine which Augustine planted here but impure, and his successors made worse with watering, is since, by the happy Reformation, cleared and refined to the purity of the Scriptures.”—*Fuller.*

CANTERBURY:

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1835.

Price Sixpence.





P R E F A C E.

THE printing of the Bible in the English Tongue was an assertion of one great point of our Christian liberty. It afforded every man an opportunity of examining the grounds, on which the Reformed Church rested its claim of being a true member of the true church of Christ, and rejected the errors and usurpations of the Romish church. But the assertion of our religious privileges, and the knowledge of the basis on which they were established, are not the whole of our duties. The glorious legacy which our forefathers purchased with their blood, and the sacred truths they have committed to our keeping, it is our duty to *maintain whole and undefiled*. Those privileges, I regret to observe, are assailed by their ancient enemies ; and those truths are seemingly depreciated, and treated with indifference, by some of those whose especial duty it is to uphold them.

Suggestions have been put forth, that the Reformation should be contemplated, at this time, solely in a religious point of view, without any reference to politics. If by politics are meant only the objects of *faction*, or the interests of *party*, my inclinations, no less than my duty, would forbid their mingling with sacred subjects. But, when political measures tend, in my opinion, to *betray the religious principles of our protestant constitution, to promote superstition and spiritual tyranny, and to confound the distinctions between true and false faith*, then, I conceive a duty devolves upon every protestant, whether layman or clergyman, against which he cannot set up either his own private feelings, or his fear of public misrepresentation. When a breach has been effected in the outer walls of our Jerusalem, or when treachery or weakness have unbarred the outer gate, and the foe pours in with shouts—"down with her, down with her, even to the ground"—can it be the duty of her faithful defenders, not to rush to stem the assault, but in silence, and with folded arms, to sit within the recesses of the temple, till the sword of the oppressor shall flash over its altars,

and the firebrands of the destroyer blaze amidst its rafters ? I think not. "Truth is great and will prevail." I shall speak what I believe to be truth. Feeble as my voice may be, it shall be raised to warn the country, that popery and indifference predominate in her councils and her legislature ; that some of her counsellors are forwarding the schemes of the bitterest enemies of the Reformation, and abusing their office to the subversion of the Protestant Established Church of England and Ireland. The *motives* on which they act are known, not to me, perhaps not to themselves, but to the searcher of all hearts. Nor am I concerned to question their assertion, that they *seek* the welfare of the Established Church. To me, and to the kingdom at large, it cannot be of any great importance, whether the church be deliberately bartered for the gratification of ambition and party rancour ; whether it be betrayed, under the delusive theories of a vague liberalism, regardless of creeds and Christian truth ; or, whether it be sacrificed, under the vain hope of compromise, with an implacable and crafty foe. I inquire not, whether the ministers of O'Connell and the popish priests be slaves or dupes. Enough for me it is, that they are doing the *papists' work*, and that I am unable to doubt, as I fain would, the destructive *tendency* of their proceedings. I would gladly persuade myself, if I could, of the friendship, which they profess for the church, but I cannot shut my eyes to the strange contradiction which appears between their professions and their practice.

I am quite at a loss to understand the nature of that friendship for the Established Church, which produces results precisely such as its most venomous foes would desire, and as its most zealous and its natural defenders deeply deplore.

I am at a loss to understand that friendship for the Established Church, which commands the applause and eager services of almost all the infidels, the revolutionists, the agitators, the political dissenters, and especially the papists, of the empire ; and, by the aid of these allies, triumphs over the bishops and clergy of England and Ireland, and the majority of English members in the legislature.

I am at a loss to understand that friendship, which courts *these allies*, and loses no opportunity of sneering at, and de-

preciating, the bishops, the clergy, and the advocates of the Protestant Established Church.

I am at a loss to understand the friendship, which first encouraged resistance to the payment of the Irish clergy, and then refused to separate from the bill for their relief, a clause of confiscation,* which the Ministry themselves, in the previous session, had declared, in the face of the country, possessed no necessary connexion with it, and, as they very well knew, must be an insuperable bar to the measure, and prevent the termination of suffering and persecution.

I am at a loss to understand the friendship, which, when Sir Robert Peel (whose integrity stands unimpeached), solemnly pledged himself to put an end to agitation, by carrying into effect, measures of reform; and when those who differed upon the usefulness of such reforms, seeing a limit to innovation fixed, expressed their readiness to submit; wantonly cast down these hopes, and by the aid of the motley crew already alluded to, set up an abstract proposition of appropriation or plunder, which *destroyed all confidence—threw every thing again into confusion—broke off the progress of all reforms*—and, after all, was *BASED UPON NO ACTUAL SURPLUS TO APPROPRIATE.*†

I cannot comprehend the church friendship of men, who, after having denounced the Popish agitator as an enemy to this country, and after having been denounced by him with every epithet descriptive of incapacity, baseness, ferocity, and recklessness, adopt all his measures, receive his patronage, and retain their political existence by his permission.

These are marks of a *friendship* for the church, which, in former days, plain and honest men would not have been able to understand, and which operates in encroachments upon Protestant privileges, and in an elevation of Popish audacity, exceeding any of those attacks, which hurled James the Second from his throne.

I may be mistaken in my views. But I have looked into the subject to the best of my humble ability, and in matters of such vital importance, I must speak in plain and uncompromising terms. The attack is artfully made, in the first instance, upon the *REVENUES*‡ of the church, with a view to make the question seem a mere matter of property, in which the clergy alone are concerned, and that

* Appendix 1. † Appendix 2. ‡ Appendix 3.

the people and the clergy have *separate* interests. It is calculated to blind the public to that spiritual despotism, of which the object is always the same, and which never slumbers over those opportunities of promoting its own domination, that necessarily present themselves in the changes of human events. Let the people beware of this fallacy. The ultimate object of attack is the *faith* and the *doctrines* of the reformation—faith and doctrines which the laity, as well as the clergy, are interested and bound to maintain, as they value their immortal souls.

O England ! call to mind thy renown, and thy strength of old. Like the Nazarite of Israel, thou hast been the champion of truth, thy might hath not failed, and thou hast defied the Philistines, because thou hadst not broken thy vows to the Lord thy God. Rouse thee, while there is yet time ! Break from the blandishments of a mere treacherous liberalism, which would lull thee into a fatal slumber, from which thou shalt awaken only to find—that thou hast entrusted thine honour, and thy liberty, to a harlot. Thy locks of strength are not yet shorn. The bonds with which thy betrayers would bind thee, are but as the “green withs” upon the arms of Sampson. With God as thine helper, thou canst break them “as a thread of tow is broken, when it toucheth the fire.” Awake, then ; put forth thy strength ; burst their trammels, and cast them from thee ; keep thy vows sacredly ; maintain thy truths firmly ; lest the Philistines find thee helpless—forsaken of that God whom thou forsakest, and fit only to be the victim, and the sport, of the Dagon of Popery.

A SERMON, &c.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

1 Thess. v. 21.

THESE two plain and reasonable maxims of St. Paul, which commend themselves, at once, to every man's common sense, contain the principles of that Reformation, in which our national church *purified itself* from the errors of popery. Our forefathers claimed the right, without which the gift of reason would be but an ignoble boon, of "proving all things;" and, more especially, the things connected with the salvation of their immortal souls. At the same time, actuated by a piety and sincerity, equalled only by their fortitude and judgment, they determined to use their right of proving all things, with reverence and meekness; and, at any sacrifice, and through any trials of their faith, to "hold fast that which is good." To the noble assertion, and prudent exercise, of this privilege, by the first promoters of the Reformation, we are, under God, in no small degree indebted for the enjoyment of our religious liberty, and for the excellence and purity of our national Church as now established—a blessing, we contend, second to none, conferred upon any nation, since the world first received the revelation of its only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

While the gratitude of protestants, for their newly-restored privileges, was fresh, and the recently vindicated liberties of our national church, were endangered, from the power of the popes and the treasonable practices of their blind followers, the Reformation, and the points in which it is distinguished from the church of Rome, were made the frequent subjects of discussion in our pulpits. But, in process of time, as the Reformation became more firmly established, and the temporal power of the popes enfeebled, this custom had fallen into disuse, and the subject occupied but little of our attention.* Circumstances have, however, within these last few years, rendered it necessary that protestants should be awakened to vigilance against approaching danger, and to the nature of their position and privileges.

Our ancestors, who had bitter experience of the character and effects of popery, never felt themselves safe, while it had *power* to persecute and tyrannize over them. In history, the darkest and

* "We often grow insensible of our blessings, merely from the long and uninterrupted possession of them. And this insensibility usually makes us careless of preserving them, till we are again taught to judge of their value, by their loss. Something of this kind, it is to be feared, is our own case at present with regard to the Reformation; we have possessed that blessing so long, that we have forgot to *enjoy* it. Ignorant of the servitude under which our fathers groaned, we know not how to relish our own deliverance: the deformities of a superstition two hundred years ago are so far out of sight, as to make us less attentive to the beauties of a reasonable service. By these means, we not only reap less pleasure than we might, and produce less fruit than we ought; but we grow less apprehensive of the tyranny that watches to enslave us, and less zealous to maintain that liberty which our ancestors sacrificed their lives to purchase for us."—*Glocester Ridley's Life of Bishop Ridley.*

the bloodiest pages are those, which record the perfidious disregard of the most solemn engagements, and the merciless and inexorable cruelties of that church towards those, who dared to appeal from its mandates to the word of God. It claims to be incapable of error and of change; its principles of universal domination have been only repressed, not renounced; its persecuting decrees are still taught in a book, printed under the sanction of the Romish archbishop of Dublin, and used as a text-book by the priests.* A consistent practice has been exhibited. The result of every increase of power has been aggravated injuries against the protestants, both laity and clergy, in that country; menaces and agitation, calumnies and plunder, violence and assassinations. Nor are its machinations confined to Ireland. In every part of England, its active hostility to the established church, is felt. Wheresoever, and by whatsoever enemies, the downfall of the protestant established church of this country is sought, there the papists are found as allies—fomenting, or leading, the movement, as may best suit their purpose—a purpose, which, if crowned with success, will include in its destructive range, not merely the established church, but all those deluded protestants, who may be blindly led to lend their assistance in opening the breach to foes, who, if they be consistent with their *authenticated* principles, or their hitherto *unaltered practice*, must conspire against the religious liberties of all protestants.

It is time, when these things are in progress, that we should look back upon the ground of the Reformation, and prepare ourselves with a “ reason

* Appendix 4.

for the faith that is in us." But, in addition to these awakening considerations, a remarkable and inviting coincidence presents itself. On this day, the 4th of October, exactly 300 years ago, a most important step in the Reformation was effected. *The first printed translation of the whole Bible in the English tongue was completed.* The charter of our salvation was no longer a sealed volume—it was opened to the nation—we were enabled to follow St. Paul's counsel, "to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." And not less remarkable is it, that not only the three hundredth year of this great event should come round amidst the awakening dangers of our protestant church, just alluded to, but, that a day, in which we may concur in the celebration of this mercy, should fall on the **LORD'S DAY**, when "we assemble and meet together, to render thanks for the great benefits which we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul." May we not almost take it as a call, to turn to God in his temple, with grateful remembrance of the blessings of the Reformation—to rejoice, with holy joy, in that Word, which we are now all permitted to hear in our own tongue—and, amidst the dangers which threaten our church, to ask of him that protection, and assistance, which, both outwardly and inwardly, is, indeed, requisite and necessary, both for its safety and its welfare? Can we, then, better employ our time, than in taking a view of some important landmarks, by which the protestant may guard himself against the attempts of those, whose artifices, or *whose ignorance*, may mislead him? And, as the

limits of a discourse will not permit me to enter fully into the many points of difference between the Romanists and the Reformed Church, I shall select one point on which I can enlarge, and which, I consider, in the *present times*, as requiring particular attention. I shall shew, 1st, with respect to its history, and 2dly, with respect to its doctrines, that our national reformed church was not a *new church*, but, as I have said, *purified itself*—used its reason, for that purpose for which reason was given by its Divine Author—for “*proving all things, and holding fast that which is good.*”

I affirm, then, that the protestant church, established in these kingdoms, is not a *new church*—it is not a church which dates its *beginning* from the Reformation—it is not a strange church, which opposed itself to *Christ's holy catholic or UNIVERSAL church*. But, it is an ancient and true branch of *Christ's holy catholic church*. *It is the same church which has ever existed, since there was a Christian church, in this nation—it is our national church, in its pure and primitive form, cleansed (and cleansed by its own act and deed,) from those corruptions, unscriptural inventions, and contradictions, which, in the course of time, the usurped power of popery had imposed upon it, and retaining all, that constituted it a true branch of the true vine—the church of Christ.* The Reformation, my brethren, was the result not of strangers, or foreigners, coming in to plant a new religion, but the work of the members of the national church asserting their Christian liberty—proving all things—and holding fast that which is good; holding fast all that was sanctioned by the church of Christ, and rejecting all that was the corrupt imposition of the church of Rome.

Those who cling to the errors of that church—not those who reformed our national church—are the agents of foreigners and strangers; and their corrupt additions, to the old and true doctrines of both the ancient British church, and the catholic and universal church, are the new doctrines.

This distinction is of great importance in the present times. Every protestant ought clearly to comprehend it; for, more than once, have the papists successfully played off the artifice, of pretending that the reformed church doctrines are novelties. Formerly, the popish writers thought they asked a difficult question, when they demanded where our religion was before Luther? But, they soon got the answer, that it was where it always was, in the Bible. It was, moreover, in every church where the faith of the Bible was acknowledged; and, though it was almost buried, and strangely contradicted by the corruptions of the Romish church, yet its great doctrines and truths, as I shall presently point out, were to be found even there.* But this question has been effectually and often answered; and, in the present day, it has been found convenient to put it forward in another shape. It has been asserted with great assurance, by the Romanists, and their agents, and echoed by some inconsiderate and ignorant persons professing themselves protestants, that the property of our national church was gained by the plunder of the revenues of the popish church; just as though the protestants of that day had been a body of strangers and foreigners, wholly unconnected with the national church. But the fact is, that the Re-

* “Where,” said the papist to the protestant, “was your religion before Luther?” “Where,” rejoined the protestant, “was your face before it was washed?”

formers were members of the national church—the Reformation was the act of the national church itself,—not casting aside its *substantial doctrines*—not seeking to introduce doctrines altogether new—but rejecting the novelties and the usurpations of Rome, restoring itself to its original purity, and claiming its original independence of a foreign interference.

Let us look at the facts of the case. Long before the mission of St. Augustine—long before the popes were invested with that usurped power, with which ambition on the one hand, and ignorance on the other, enabled them to enslave other nations, there existed, in both England and Ireland, a free Christian church, of which the members were neither denied access to the word of God, nor acknowledged their dependence upon Rome. The British bishops, both disclaimed and resisted the authority of Augustine—they acknowledged no obedience due to the pope—Ireland was the theme of popish invective for its denial of the Pope's jurisdiction. Popery was *forced* upon it, and some districts, up to a very late period, maintained their independence of the Romish despotism. And it was only by degrees, that those usurpations and abominations were introduced, which, at the time of the Reformation, flagrantly demanded a return to the ancient faith and discipline.

Moreover, not only was there a time when the national church was not yoked to either the dominion or the superstitions of popery, and when she had free access to the word of God, but the very light, which blazed upon her, after a long period of darkness and delusion, always burned, however obscurely and dimly, *within herself*. It gra-

dually spread itself from one member to another, till they and their rulers, not strangers and enemies, became impressed with the necessity of her being cleansed from her corruptions, and delivered from her foreign yoke. Wickliffe, an ecclesiastic of the national church, first took a decisive part, in opening the eyes of the people, to the spiritual privileges and liberty of which they had been defrauded by popish encroachments, and in directing them to look into their charter, the Word of God. Those, who claimed and used, this right, gradually and steadily increased in numbers; they had their martyrs; they began to be distinguished by the name of "Lollards," and, afterwards of "Scripturists." The efforts of Luther, and the German reformers, tended to quicken the spirit of inquiry, and to render more notorious the usurped powers and the erroneous doctrines of the Romish church. And, though our enemies would insinuate, that our church owes its existence to Henry the Eighth, the impartial observer must see, that, under God, that monarch only hastened, but did not give rise to the Reformation. A spirit was in action, which might have been retarded, but could not be suppressed—a light was shed abroad, which might have been dimmed, but could not be extinguished, and in which the church of England was not removed to make way for strangers, but was divested of foreign additions, and restored, by its own efforts, to its ancient rights and purity. The church of England is no more a *new* church, than a beautiful temple would be a new temple, because its possessors had cleared away the weeds and brambles which encumbered its foundations, and obstructed its entrance—cut off the ivy that matted

up its windows—pulled down the plaster which covered its architecture—and removed the discordant additions, by which the bad taste of former occupiers had made it resemble a play-house, rather than a temple. And these restorations of the national church to its primitive doctrines and original rights were, I repeat, not made by strangers—not by either the ministers or the people of another church—not to transfer its jurisdiction and revenues to the priesthood of a foreign or hostile church—but they were effected by bishops, priests, and people of *that church itself* specially excluding a *foreign and usurping* power from participation in the jurisdiction and revenues, which belonged only to the *national church*. Before the Reformation, and during its progress, Cranmer was archbishop, Ridley, Hooper, Latimer, and other protestants, were bishops, of that national church, and acknowledged even by the Romanists as such; as is proved by the formalities with which they were degraded from their office, before they were committed to the flames. Even Gardiner, and others, who subsequently opposed it, acquiesced, and aided, in some of its measures.* And, let it be remembered, that, so late as the time of Elizabeth, when the Reformation was formally established, and the reformed liturgy ordered, by law, to be used, out of *nine thousand four hundred* beneficed clergy of the national church, only one hundred and seventy-seven resigned, and the remainder, notwithstanding even the oath of supremacy, kept their benefices. The reformed church retained all that belonged to the church of Christ. Though they proved all things, they held fast that which is good.

* Appendix 5

They proceeded not by the agency of private individuals, but under the direction of their ecclesiastical authorities. They did not reject the doctrines, or the authority, of the catholic, or universal, church, though they denied that the church of Rome had any just pretension to be exclusively called the catholic church, or to lord it over that branch of it established in an independent country. In it, indeed, were to be found many of the great truths of the catholic or universal church of Christ; and, in this respect, it was a branch (though sadly corrupted) of the catholic church, as the church of England was also a branch of the same catholic or universal church, of which the body is composed of many churches. But, if the church of Rome was not the catholic or universal church, much less were her inventions and superstitions the doctrines of the universal church. The reformers did not change, for the sake of change. Whereinsoever the doctrines of God's word, and the practice of the primitive church, prevailed, there they held fast that which is good; but, in proving all things, they found numberless human inventions, numberless novelties, and impostures, palmed upon the national church by the papists —them, and them only, they rejected.

A very superficial inspection of some of the doctrines, on which we differ from the church of Rome, will at once demonstrate this.

The reformers, it is true, insisted upon the people having free access to the Word of God, which the Romish church had prohibited. Yet, not only does common sense at once declare against the absurdity of a Christian being debarred from consulting the book which treats of his noblest hopes and interests, not only are express commands to

be found, in both the Old and New Testaments, from prophets and apostles, and even from Christ himself, that we should read and consult the Scriptures, but divines, whose authority in the catholic church is not questioned by the church of Rome itself, up to the 13th century, urgently recommended the reading of the Scriptures. I select, as proofs of this assertion, two quotations from writers of authority of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

“ In the eleventh age, hear what advice Theophylact gives parents—*If thou wilt have thy children obey thee, instruct them in the Word of God; say not, that it belongs only to monks to read the Scriptures, for, it is the duty of every Christian; especially of those who are conversant in the world, who stand in need of greater assistances, as men tossed in a storm. It is thy concern and interest, that they hear the Scriptures, for they will thence learn to honour their father and mother.*”

So far was this great bishop from thinking the reading of the Scriptures hurtful to the laity, that he thought it more necessary for them, than others; so far from confining them only to the learned, that he would have children, the most ignorant of the laity, to read them.

“ In the twelfth age, *Rupertus Tuitiensis* says—*That Holy Scripture is rightly called a field, because it is, in truth, a publick thing, that lies open, and is proposed to all men who are desired to read or hear it.* To whom we may add St. Bernard, who, in a popular discourse, earnestly exhorts his hearers, to apply themselves to the Scriptures, from the consideration of those inestimable benefits they would receive thereby.”*

* Protestant Rule of Faith, &c.

The book, from which I take these quotations contains proofs, from divines of every century (up to the times of the apostles, who addressed their revelations to the people themselves, and in their own tongue) that the Word of God originally was free, and recommended to all Christians, and of course to the ancient British church. It was not till the year 1228, when the disciples of Waldo had exposed, from Scripture, the impostures of the Romish church, that this liberty was taken from the laity. The first prohibition, by an authorized assembly, was that of the Synod of Thoulouse. These are the words of the prohibition :—

“ We forbid that laymen be permitted to have the books of the Old and New Testament, unless, perhaps, some one, out of devotion, desire to have the Psalter, or Breviary, for divine offices, and the hours of the Blessed Virgin, but even those now mentioned, they may not have translated in the vulgar tongue.”

Thus liberty to read the Scriptures, prevailed from the time of the apostles down to the thirteenth century ; but, when the Scriptures condemned the church of Rome, then the church of Rome forbade the reading of the Scriptures. When the reformers, therefore, translated the Scriptures, did they act against the catholic or *universal* church of Christ, or only against the church of Rome ? Were they, or the church of Rome, chargeable with *new* doctrine ?

The same observation is true with respect to all the doctrines of our national church ; they are all doctrines, not only of Scripture, but of the ancient and truly catholic or universal church of Christ. Our limits will not, of course, permit me even to touch upon all the points, in which the *innovations* of Rome were rejected, and whatso-

45

ever truths were left us, retained. I can only select a few instances. Our national church always adored the ever blessed Trinity—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; but the church of Rome added the novelty of image worship ; no authority is to be found for it in the first ages of the church. Our national church always acknowledged the three ancient creeds—the Apostles' creed, the Nicene, and the Athanasian ; but she finds in these no authority whatever for the Romish novelties—such as purgatory, the mediation of departed saints, worship of the mass. and many other superstitions which she rejected.*

Our national church always derived the commission of her bishops, priests, and deacons, from Christ's commission to the apostles, and the succession and practice of the ancient church ; but she does not consider all the ceremonies of the Romish form of ordination as of the same authority ; and, therefore, she exercises her own power, which, as a church independent, not of Christ's body, but of the church of Rome, she possesses, to decree rites and ceremonies for those of her own communion, and agreeable to God's Word.

Our national church acknowledges, with the ancient church, that the Scriptures are of divine inspiration, and that nothing is to be received as an article of faith which may not be found in them, or proved from them. But she finds no foundation for the doctrine, that the Apostles committed to the church of Rome, or to any other, unwritten traditions, which are to be received as of equal, if not superior authority, to Scripture itself.

Our national church acknowledges the catholic

* Appendix, 6.

or universal church of Christ ; but she rejects, as a usurpation, the pretence that the church of Rome is the universal church, or even has any supremacy, or rule, over other national churches. She maintains that the body of the universal church has many members, and that all those churches, and those churches only, are members of the visible church of Christ, “ in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things that, of necessity, are requisite to the same.” (Article 19.) “ This article,” said Burnet, “ with some that follow it, relates to the fundamental difference between us and the church of Rome ; they teaching that we are to judge of doctrines by the authority and decisions of the church ; whereas we affirm, that we are, first, to examine the doctrine, and according to that, to judge of the purity of a church.”

The reformed church admits the exercise of private judgment, but she points out the limits within which, and the responsibility under which, it is to be exercised. She claims authority in controversies of faith—but it is an authority of order. The terms of communion with her are laid down by her, and not by private individuals. But she refers her decisions to scripture. Her’s is an authority, which is necessary for edification and for union in any society ; and it is an authority, not pretending, like that of the church of Rome, to be founded on its not being liable to error. The limit of obedience is distinctly marked. “ It is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God’s word written. Neither may it so expound one place of scripture, *that it be repugnant to another.*” Here the

right of private judgment comes in. If a man doubt the interpretation of the church, he may compare it with God's word, and obey God rather than man; he will exercise his judgment, whether he *will continue* in her communion, though she, in her creeds and articles, lays down *her* views of scripture as the *terms* of communion with her. But let him be careful to distinguish between caprice and judgment. It is a right to be exercised with fear and with responsibility. Our church is entitled to great reverence; we may not only be cast out of it by the sentence of its authority; but we may cast ourselves out of it by our own perverseness or pride. We have the right of private judgment, where our salvation is at stake, but we exercise it at our peril. A man may say that he has a right to act according to his own judgment in lying, in lust, in avarice, or any other sin; but he must remember, that, though no human authority may have the power to prevent him, God has the power to punish him for the improper exercise of that right. Even so the right of private judgment in rejecting the authority of the church, must be exercised at our peril. If, through conceit of our ability, through obstinacy or indolence, or a spirit of schism and strife, we despise our church without impartial and sufficient examination, we may put ourselves out of the pale of the true Catholic or universal church, of which an ancient Father, before the days of Romish usurpation, thus speaks:—

“That only is the catholic church which retains the true worship. This is the fountain of truth—this is the household of faith—this is the temple of God, into which whosoever shall not have entered, or from which whosoever shall have departed, that man is ali-

enated from the hope of life and of eternal salvation."
(Lactantius, Div. Inst. lib. 4. c. 30.)

Of that catholic church, our national church is not the whole, but a sound and purified branch. Veneration for the primitive and true church is her distinguishing character—veneration for that church impelled her to put away the inventions of popery. To that church, she has referred all her doctrines—from that church she takes her creed and liturgy—of that church she claims the privileges, enjoyed before all the superstitions and usurpations of Rome were in existence; on the foundation on which that church was built, she is founded also; “other foundation,” she well knows, “can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1st Cor. iii. 11.) She stands not on the weak inventions of man, but on the eternal word of God; she does not profess to be built upon the traditions of the church of Rome, but on the faith and practice of the true Catholic church; the fellowship of her members extends far beyond that of the church of Rome; they are “fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built npon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the *chief corner stone.*” (Eph. ii. 19, 20.)

Such is the established church of England, the national church, brought back to the standard of God’s word, and of the primitive church—purified by its own members, from the inventions, novelties, and usurpations which the church of Rome had obtruded in the course of time, and during periods of great ignorance—delivered from vain traditions, and superstitious observances—from unscriptural hopes, and unscriptural burthens—and turned wholly to God, and to his life-giving

truths—to the one atoning sacrifice, and to the one only Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. To belong to it, to love it, to honour it, is our safety, and our glory. May we all, whether clergy, or laity, who have the happiness to be members of it, endeavour to adorn it, by a life conformable to that blessed Word of God, to which it appeals, and which it spreads before us. May we remember, with grateful hearts, the treasure which the mercy of God has consigned to us. May we never betray, by our supineness, nor forfeit, by our sins, that pearl of great price, to purchase which, the labours of confessors, and the blood of martyrs, have been profusely spent. We are enabled, by God's blessing, and the free use of God's word, to "prove all things;" but let us not forget to "**HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.**"

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

FALLACY OF THE APPROPRIATION CLAUSE.

This clause is based upon the false pretence that the national established church, at the Reformation, *came into possession* of its revenues by an appropriation, which transferred them from papists to protestants. The church was *always in possession*, and required no appropriation, or statute, to put it into possession. The church still remained the church; both as related to the essentials of Christianity, and to its *original* character, Popery was an excrescence, and was put away; it encumbered the church, but was not the church itself. That the state *did appropriate certain portions* of the church property is too well known, and a more profligate act of tyranny and sacrilege never degraded this country. But the state did *not appropriate church property to the present established church*. And, if the above rapacious, unprincipled act, is to be pleaded as a *precedent* for the state to appropriate again, in the name of common honesty and decency, let it be applied, first, to cases in which the power of appropriation *unquestionably was exercised*, and not to that case in which it was *not*. Lord John Russell's noble ancestor did, as every one knows, come into possession of his broad lands by an act of appropriation of the state; but the established church did not. Aye! and there were *conditions in the appropriation*, too, which I suspect were not fulfilled.

By the 27th Henry VIII., sect. 17., it is enacted, that those persons who had grants of church lands, their heirs, successors, &c. "should keep, or cause to be kept, an honest and continual house and household, in the same site or precincts, and to occupy yearly, in ploughing and tillage of

husbandry, as much of the same demesnes, that is to say, as much of the same demesnes which hath been commonly used to be kept in tillage by the governors, abbots, &c., or by the farmer or farmers occupying the same, within the last 20 years next before this act." It is true, this was repealed. But this does not affect the position, that the state *did exercise* the power of appropriation on the property in question, and appropriated it *with public duties annexed*. The state, therefore, has, with regard to *this* property, done all that Lord J. Russell pretends would give it the right to appropriate it again.

Now, if his lordship were so in love with his state power of appropriating church property to general uses, that he thought it worthy of being enforced at the price of starving the protestant clergy of Ireland, of putting a stop to all Sir Robert Peel's reforms, and of continuing the miseries and agitations of the country, here was at least a more equitable and decent case, and a case in which there would have been a *real surplus*, to which he might have applied it, instead of merely insisting on an abstract proposition, without any surplus to come under its operation.

Instead of putting the country to the expense of a commission to inquire into the number of protestants in each parish in Ireland, any old basket-woman could have informed his lordship, and the House of Commons, that in Covent Garden (whatsoever be the case at Woburn and Tavistock) there is no *honest house or household* kept for the traveller and the poor by the Duke of Bedford, and that whatever fruit may be there, springs from no "*ploughing or tillage of husbandry*" therein. And no doubt the parishioners of St. Paul, Covent Garden, would easily satisfy his lordship, that an abundant *surplus*, beyond any sum that his noble father was likely to apply to such purposes, or to need for his own sustenance and that of his family, would be found there, and also plenty of poor, whom the same parish could send to absorb the said surplus, in education, food, &c. And over *this* property the state did *unquestionably* exercise the right of appropriation ; and, consequently, by his lordship's own theory, may exercise it again. But, over the church property it *never has* ; yet, when the church property has become *ducal plunder*, it is to be sacred from state appropriation ; but that portion which has *always*

been dedicated to God is *never to be secure*, but is to be appropriated to secular, perhaps to superstitious, purposes. It is hardly necessary to say, that I do not *advocate* this theory of spoliation, in any shape; all I urge is, that those who do, should be *decently consistent* in its application. Even in such consistency there would have been wrong, and the duke might justly have complained of his son's trifling with the principles of all property; but there would at least have been a show of sincerity and impartiality. I fear his lordship labours under a terrible delusion. O'Connell and the popish priests may support him in his present ambition; but methinks in his future fame, and still more in his future reflexions, he may find them like a "bruised reed, whereon, if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce him."

No. II.

EFFECT OF APPROPRIATION CLAUSE.

The sentiments of nineteen-twentieths of the clergy of the Established Church are, I believe, truly expressed in the subjoined extract from an address to the King, from the Diocese of Canterbury:—

" We are neither swayed by party nor personal motives, nor influenced by any feelings of hostility to safe and useful reforms. Whatsoever variety of opinion might have prevailed amongst us upon the necessity, or the expected advantages of the changes projected by the Church Commission appointed by the advice of your Majesty's late Administration, our cheerful co-operation would have been secured, by the frank declarations and honorable conduct of Sir Robert Peel, by his concurrence with the rulers of the Church, and by the establishment of a point at which innovation was to stop, and concession to find its limits.

" But we regret that the foundations of this confidence, so essential to any real Reform, as well as to the tranquillization and union of your Majesty's subjects, has been fearfully shaken. To us it seems impossible to have devised a principle more inevitably fatal to all improvement and concord, or more certainly calculated to keep alive rapacity and agitation, alarm and distrust, than that adopted in a recent resolution of the House of Commons, which not only at once suspended measures of Reform in actual progress in that House, with a fair prospect of *support* from the Lords and the country at large, but, at the *same time*, underlined the ground on which alone the friends of the Church, and the Clergy in particular, could give their

assent to any changes. If that resolution should be carried into effect, a breach will be made which must open the way to endless spoliation, and leave us no position on which a barrier can be raised against the assaults of open enemies, or the treachery of pretended friends. There will remain nothing to hope, but every thing to fear from change."

The beneficial results of any reform, whatsoever its intrinsic merits, greatly depend upon its commanding the confidence of those who are the subjects of it. But I would put it to Lord Melbourne, as a gentleman, and a man of understanding, whether he could lay his hand upon his heart, and say, that the appropriation clause is not calculated to alarm every honest protestant, and whether the suspicions awakened by it, are likely to be quelled, by his ill-omened supporters in the measure, O'Connell, Hume, Roebuck, and the like. Surely, if his Lordship desires to conciliate our confidence, his administration should do some act, give some pledge, beyond mere professions, to assure us, that they design the support of the church, and not the sacrifice of it to party ambition.

No. III.

CHURCH, NOT PAID BY THE PEOPLE.

It is very properly stated in the following passage from the petition of the Protestant Bishops of Ireland, and has been proved over and over again, that the revenues of the Protestant church are not paid by the Romanists, nor, indeed, by the people at all. They arise out of lands belonging to the church, and from a charge subject to which, every man purchases or rents his property, and on account of which he always makes a deduction in his purchase money, or his rent, as the case may be.

" That your petitioners further most respectfully submit to your lordships, that what is alleged in vindication of this provision of the bill, namely, that it is unjust that the Roman Catholic should be called upon to pay for spiritual services, which he neither requires nor receives, is founded on palpable misrepresentation, inasmuch as the Roman Catholic pays for no such spiritual services, but in satisfying the demands for tithe composition, merely discharges an engagement on the faith of which he occupies his land. In truth, the Protestant incumbent is paid by no one, but in return for the duties which he performs (of which every parishioner who chooses may avail himself) enjoys a portion of a corporate endowment, to which he alone

can prefer a legal claim, and which is secured to him by a title more ancient than that of any other species of property."

No. IV.

POPISH DOCTRINE OF VOWS AND OATHS.

REV. DR. MC HALE.

Examined 3rd November, 1826.

THE Commissioners find the following proposition laid down in a part of Bailly's class-book, now used in Mayneath, in the second volume of "Moral Theology," page 140 :—

PROPOSITION.

There is in the church a power of dispensing in vows and oaths. It is proved from the Scriptures, Matt. 18 :— "Whatsoever things ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven." These words, though general, denote the power of loosing the bonds, not only of sins, but, also, of vows and oaths.

You observe that it is there laid down, in the broadest and most unqualified manner, that there is, in the church, a power of loosing, not merely from the bonds of sin, but, also, from the bonds of oaths, and it is there asserted, that that can be proved, from the 18th chap. of St. Matthew, in which it is stated "Whatsoever things ye shall loose," &c. Do you attach that meaning to the word "solveritis" (ye shall loose), that is attributed to it in this passage? Ans. "Yes, I think that it may be susceptible of the meaning of dispensing from oaths."

Dr. Mc Hale, then, after saying he draws no conclusion himself from the passage of scripture, but, that he "believes the conclusion in the text book," and observing, that he may believe the conclusion defined by a general council, without believing the inference from any passage of scripture, by which it arrives at that conclusion, is asked the following question :—

Without further investigation, whether the doctrine is to be deduced from that particular text, we beg to know whether you believe the doctrine, that is, whether you believe, as is there laid down, that there is in the church a

power of dispensing from oaths? Ans. Surely, in the sense the proposition is laid down and explained by the author.

We find it laid down in page 145, of that class book, that the following are just causes of dispensation in those cases, viz.: first, the honor of God; secondly, the *utility* of the church; thirdly, the common good of the republic; and fourthly, the common good of society. Who is to be the *judge* of what the *utility* of the church may require? Ans. The *superiors* of the church. Does it not appear there to be laid down as a universal proposition, that the *utility* of the church is a just cause? Ans. It is laid down as a proposition, that the *utility* of the church is a just cause.—In a *doubtful* case, who is to determine whether the *utility* of the church is such as to require or justify that dispensation, or not? Ans. In a very doubtful case, I am always to *presume in favor of the judges on the bench.*

In all these cases, the *judges of utility* and dispensers from oaths, are the popish priesthood—the church, whose *utility* is to be the sufficient reason for breaking oaths and vows, means only the Popish church, which claims the right off destroying heretics, holds all men heretics who do not acknowledge its jurisdiction, and could find no greater work of *utility* than the ruin of the protestants in England and Ireland. These are not antiquated doctrines—these are doctrines taught in the Romanist college of Maynooth, in Ireland, and the above answers are the answers of Dr. Mc Hale, now Popish Archbishop of Tuam.

The slavish prostration of conscience which that church, so adverse to all liberty, requires, may be guessed by Dr. Mc Hale's answer respecting his *presuming in favor of the judges*. But, lest there should be a shadow of doubt, let the following passage from the Maynooth class-bloock shew the blasphemous arrogance and usurpation of popery, and enable protestants to understand what security they can have, when popery can dispense from *oaths* upon the plea of *utility* to popery.

“ Such is the sacredness of the obligation to obey the church, that, even *at the day of judgment*, the sinner, who has erred by following its commands, may thus address his heavenly Judge, and *claim forgiveness as of right*. ‘ Lord, if it be an error which we have followed, thou thyself hast deceived us by thine own

plain and reiterated direction, that we should hear the church, even as we hear thee. *Thou thyself hast deceived us by thy apostles, by the pastors and teachers appointed by thee ' for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of thy body '—who have commanded us so to do. Thou thyself hast deceived us by thy church, called by St. Paul ' the pillar and ground of the truth,' which church has never ceased to exact from her children a firm assent to all her decrees, threatening an everlasting curse against those who dare to rebel against her.* Conscious, alas! of our own ignorance in divine things, and of the weakness of man's understanding, how could we rely on ourselves in searching the Scriptures, and despise an authority so exalted? *Confidently, therefore, we say, O Lord, if it be an error which we have followed, THOU THYSELF HAST DECEIVED US AND WE ARE EXCUSED.'*"

Let the practice of the papists be compared with these doctrines, and their repeated professions.

What security has the established church found in the oaths enacted expressly to satisfy the Protestants, that the Papists would not use their legislative privileges to the detriment of that church? Where is all the peace and union which Mr. O'Connell promised, as the result of emancipation? Let the answer be read in the pamphlet of Mr. Eneas Macdonnell, the zealous and able Roman Catholic agent of the Roman Catholic Association, in which he brings accumulated proofs that the votes of the popish members, enabling Ministers to carry the appropriation clause, are contrary to the notorious intent of their oath, and contrary to the reiterated protestations of the Roman Catholic claimants, and of the protestant advocates of emancipation. He declares he has been made the unwilling tool of treachery and deception. Let the answer be read, too, in the words of their celebrated advocate C. Butler, Esq.

"Here then we close with our adversaries; we seek not to interfere with the Established Church, with her hierarchy, with her endowments, with her tithes, with anything else that contributes to her honor, her comfort, or her security. Give us but toleration in the true sense of that much abused word, and we CLAIM NO MORE."—C. Butler's Address to Protestants, 1813.—Pamphleteer, vol. 1.

Compare this with the conspiracy against tithes—with the persecution of protestants—the plunder and the assas-

sinations of the clergy ; and let every protestant inquire who is safe from the **UTILITY** of popery.

Compare this with Mr. O'Connell's mission to denounce the majority of the House of Lords to mobs, as tyrants ; and calling for their destruction, because they dared to oppose, in the honest exercise of their legislative functions, the infamous demand of popery, that protestant churches should be extinguished, and their revenues confiscated. Compare these things with the professions of peace which preceded emancipation, with the doctrines of "*Utility*" of the popish church, and remember that this man is the **PAID AGENT** of popery.

As an appendage to these considerations, and to the above doctrines, the use that may be made of history, to suit the *utility* of his popery, may be seen in the following parallel :—

MR. O'CONNELL IN DUBLIN,
Nov. 1826.

" A former Duke of York, the legitimate King of England, was dethroned by the English Whigs, although he had never taken an oath against their rights and liberties ; and who, instead of endeavouring to injure a single protestant, in person or in property, could be only charged with the crime of proclaiming perfect liberty of conscience.... Only contrast the Duke of York whom they dethroned, with our modern Duke."

MR. O'CONNELL in MANCHES-
TER, Sept. 10, 1835.

" The restoration came next, and James, the son of him whom the people had beheaded, afterwards mounted the throne, and was GUILTY OF THE MOST ABOMINABLE TREACHERY. But the people did not behead him ; they had become better instructed, and they left his foolish head on his shoulders, allowing him to wander about Europe, a specimen of the folly of trying to **MAKE THE PEOPLE SLAVES.**"

Kentish Observer, Sept. 17, 1835.

POPISH INTOLERANCE AND PERSECUTION.

I have not yet reached that point of illumination and liberalism, which enables me to regard history as an old almanac, or to reject, with scorn, those evidences, and aids, by which a judgment is formed, from a comparison of the principles of any society, with the fruits of those prin-

ples discoverable in the conduct of its members, at different periods of its existence. I find the church of Rome, in its unrescinded degrees, claiming to be the only church in which salvation may be found, to be incapable of error, and, consequently, not liable to change. I find it claiming supremacy and dominion, not only over all other churches, but over all individuals, and holding it as a matter of both right and duty, not merely to convert, but to compel, heretics to her faith, by absolution of its agents from the most sacred engagements, by every violence, even by death itself. If I look back into history, for the operation of these principles, I trace them, in characters of perfidy, and blood, and fire ; I trace them, in the execrable treachery, and cold-blooded murders, of St. Bartholomew's day ; I trace them, in the groans and tortures of the Spanish inquisition ; I trace them, in the merciless and iniquitous crusade, in which the poor Waldenses were slain, by hundreds of thousands ; I trace them, in the flames of Smithfield ; I trace them, in the wholesale massacres of Irish protestants ; I trace them, in the treasons, and the disguises, of the Jesuits, who assumed the garb of dissenters, to overthrow the church ; and in James's expulsion from a throne, on which he plotted the subversion of the rights he had been pledged to protect. Such are the traces I find in history, of the operation of popish principles. Popery claims to be infallible and unchangeable, and, on looking at present events, I see nothing to show, that these principles have been changed. I do not find that the decrees, which are made the foundation of those practices, have been rescinded by the pope, or given up by the popish church of Ireland. Indeed, how can they be changed ? *Individual* Roman Catholics may disclaim, and profess their abhorrence of these doctrines ; but, their *church*, to which they profess *implicit obedience*, cannot, without an act of suicide, change them. “*The whole of our faith*,” says Pallavicini, “rests upon one indivisible article, namely, the *infallible authority* of the church. The *moment, therefore, we give up any part whatever, the whole falls* ; for, whatever admits not of being divided, must, evidently, stand entire, or fall entire.”

The protestants of England, and all Europe, have to thank the Rev. Mr. M'Ghee, and Rev. Mr. O'Sullivan, for

Church guides of the Old Testament, in deciding, without appeal, all controversies relating to the law, promising that they should not err therein; and punishing with DEATH such as proudly refused to obey their decision; AND, SURELY, HE HAS NOT DONE LESS FOR THE CHURCH GUIDES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

“ The Council of Constance, in the principles it included, and the crimes it perpetrated, in the violation of faith with John Huss, (who was murdered with the Emperor Sigismund’s consent, by that Council, while he had that Emperor’s pledge for his protection in his possession) has ever been considered as the most flagrant instance of treachery and persecution. Yet we see the example and the authority of this Council in this very murder, quoted as the precedent, and the infallible rule, according to which we may be put to death for our religion in the year 1685.”

A PRACTICAL SPECIMEN OF ROMANIST TOLERATION.

EXTRACTS FROM MR. PRESTON’S LETTERS.

“ It may not be amiss to give you, for the information of your English friends, some account of the sufferings which we have endured for the last three years, in this parish.

“ Seven years ago, as I mentioned before, I had a congregation of but six persons. Every thing was under the influence of the priest; none dare dispute his sovereignty—in the very centre of a popish country, inhabited by demi-savages, and under the influence of the deadliest of despots, in the neighbourhood of the college of Maynooth, and within but a few miles of the Jesuits’ establishment of Clongarve’s wood. I knew well I should earn for myself the hostility of the priest. I was prepared for it, and sorely I felt his iron hand. Many a time have I, and my poor protestants, been the subjects of his Sunday discourse—held up by him to a fierce and cruel people, in the most invidious manner, the subjects of vituperation, the almost victims of assassination. Oh, if English protestants knew but the hundredth part of our sufferings, they would not forsake us. Would you believe, that on a Sunday three Roman catholic priests, with an immense mob at their back, came to the church door just as the service had concluded, and as the congregation were leaving the church, yelling in the most terrific manner, to the no small terror of the poor people, who had assembled there for the worship of their Maker? Would you believe that these same priests desired their flocks not to deal with, to buy from, or sell to, any protestant? Would you believe that there were persons paid nine shillings a week each, for standing in markets, and before the doors of the shops, to prevent others, who were disposed to sell their goods to protestants, from so doing; and that, in consequence, starvation nearly ensued? Had it not been for the prompt assistance of Government in sending a military and police force, to escort provisions, bought privately in a distant market town, many would have absolutely died of hunger; as it was, two or three fainted from excess of weakness, brought on by want of food.

I pledge myself to the truth of this, as of every other fact which I have stated ; that, at the very time when our distress was at its height, the priests rode up to the poor people's doors, and asked them in the most insulting manner, “*Had they plenty to eat?*”—“*Was the mutton done?*”—“*How much longer will your provisions last?*” “*We hope you are not hungry;*” and such like expressions ; thus adding insult to injuries, which they were instrumental in originating. But this is not all. Those who had the temerity to go any distance for provisions, (and some went upwards of twenty miles for them,) were met on the roads, on their return, and their horses destroyed, cars broken, and provisions trampled under foot, and the owners obliged to betake themselves to flight.

“A. J. PARSTON.”

(*Brit. Magazine*)

This clergyman, in the course of seven years, increased his protestant congregation, from six persons, to upwards of 500. Hence, this specimen of Romanist toleration.

No. V.

Gardiner, and other popish bishops, retained their sees when Henry was acknowledged by the nation as head of the church ; and thus, as Burnet observes, “another thing was established, which opened the way to all that followed ; that every national church was a compact body within itself, so that the Church of England, with the authority and concurrence of their head and king, might examine and reform all errors and corruptions, whether in doctrine or worship. All the provincial councils in the ancient church were so many precedents for this, who condemned heresies, and reformed abuses as the occasion required.”

No. VI.

THE POPISH FAITH IS SUMMED UP IN THE CREED OF PIUS IV.

This creed consists of 24 articles.

The first 12 are expressed in the the Nicene creed—these our national church faithfully holds, and these she contends were the doctrines which the *primitive church* held.

The last 12 relate to

1. The Traditions.
2. The right of the Romish Church to be sole interpreter of Scripture.
3. The Seven Sacraments.
4. Implicit faith in the doctrines of the Council of Trent on Original Sin and Justification.
5. Sacrifice of the Mass, and Transubstantiation.
6. The Lord's Supper

in only one kind. 7. Purgatory, and Prayers for the Dead. 8. Worship of Saints and Reliques. 9. Honoring Images. 10. Indulgences. 11. Dominion of Roman Church, and Supremacy of the Pope. 12. Faith in Decrees of Councils, and Damnation of those who refuse obedience to them.

These, Protestants reject; and these are novel and unscriptural. The former constitute the faith once delivered to the saints.

CONCLUSION.

The Protestants have been too long passive, and the result has been increased popish aggressions. If they look for safety, they must adopt a more active system. The papists, triumphant in Ireland, have invaded England. Now, let protestant England become the assailant, not to enslave, but to deliver Ireland. Let her take up Mr. O'Connell's favorite exclamation,

“Hereditary bondsmen,” &c.

But, at the same time, let her shew the deluded Romanists where to “strike the blow”—at the IRON YOKE OF POPERY. Give them the Word of God—it will direct them, better than their agitators, to the true cause of their wretchedness.

“*Is Israel a servant? is he a homeborn slave? why is he spoiled?*”

“*HAST THOU NOT PROCURED THIS UNTO THYSELF, IN THAT THOU HAST FORSAKEN THE LORD THY GOD, WHEN HE LED THEE BY THE WAY?*”—Jer. ii. 14. 17.

If there be any surplus of the Irish-Church, let it be applied, under the direction of the protestant bishops, to the support of the protestant clergy, against their persecutors; and especially in teaching the poor papists what Christianity was when PATRICK PREACHED IT, and what an unscriptural and heavy yoke popery, many hundred years afterwards, slipped upon their shoulders. And let those employed for these purposes, be protected (as Mr. O'Connell is, in calumniating our protestant institutions to the multitude,) and permitted to try the power of moral and scriptural arguments among the Irish people, without the danger of being pointed out for assassination.* Any policy short of this will fail. The people will continue “hereditary bondsmen” to a demoralizing superstition. England will be insecure, and Ireland, notwithstanding her generous and warm-hearted affections, blind and bigoted, blood-thirsty and wretched.

* See the case of Mairs, in the *Times*, Sept. 28, 1835.

THE
DUTY OF ACKNOWLEDGING JESUS CHRIST
IN ALL WE DO.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT



THE WEDNESDAY LECTURE,

IN

ST. JAMES'S CHURCH,

BURY SAINT EDMUND'S.

BY A

COUNTRY RECTOR.

IPSWICH:

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S E R M O N.*

COL. iii. 17.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

WHOMEVER opens his Bible, and observes that Jesus Christ was the subject of continuous prophecy, from the fall almost to the time of his appearance in the flesh, and further notices, (when he

* The Author's idea of the paramount importance of the subject, joined to his belief that it is not in general adequately appreciated, is his motive for wishing to give the discourse a wider circulation.

*did appear), the wonders of his birth, life, and death; and still more, attends to the fact, that after his visible connection with the earth ceased, he endowed with power from on high, weak mortals, to carry on the stupendous work of which He had laid the foundation—to open mysteries which had been hidden from the beginning of the world—and to bring life and immortality to light by the publication of the Gospel—whereby all mankind “were *delivered*, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage”—Whoever, I say, carefully advert to these facts, will not be surprised to find Jesus Christ to be “all in all” with the writers of the Apostolical Epistles—to be the theme of their constant eulogy and admiration—the subject of their continual reference, and the centre to whom all their observations, civil, social, or religious—temporal, or *eternal*—more or less directly pointed. Thus, (*ex. gr.*) if the duty of conjugal*

love was the subject of their exhortation, they enjoined, "Love your wives, as *Christ* also loved the Church,"—if forgiveness,—they said,—"Even as *Christ* forgave you, so also do ye": if patience, they prayed—"The Lord direct you into the patience of *Christ*—and so (not to multiply instances) in our text—"Whatever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, giving thanks to God and the Father by *Him*."

In discoursing on these words, I shall consider "doing all in the name of *Christ*," to mean (*at least*), doing all in reference to his *faith*, his *love*, and his *glory*, and shall then conclude with some observations on the duty of *thanksgiving*, as one of the things more particularly singled out by the Apostle from among those which ought to be done *in the name of Christ*—"giving thanks to God and the Father by *Him*."

And FIRST, to act in reference to the *faith of Christ*, is to recognize in our

actions, those *doctrines* and *principles* which are the ground-work of his *mediatorial* relation. Foremost among these is the doctrine of our own utter insufficiency to the procurement of salvation, without the *blood* of Christ to atone for sins that are past, and the *grace* of Christ to help to guard against the repetition of them in future. A person acting under the influence of this principle, will not think of himself more highly than he ought to think. Although he may not distinctly refer every action up to this source in the *doing of it*, yet his *habitual* feeling will be that of humility and lowliness ; disclaiming all merit even in his best actions, and viewing them more on the side of their deficiency, than setting up their claim to excellence. His pride will feel a check at every recollection of his sins ; and the habit of his mind will be not so much to aspire to reward, as to deprecate punishment. He will not suffer the plea of a “good heart”—

that common apology for a bad life—to blind his eyes to his own sinfulness ; but recollecting that to Him with whom he hath to do, and from whom no secrets are hid, all things are naked and open, he will as much fear the close scrutiny of his inmost breast, as the open arraignment of his outward deeds ; and in both cases, one as well as the other, will feel himself irresistibly prompted to cry out with the Psalmist—“Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord ; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”—Such will be the *practical* feelings of a person acting under the *habitual* impression of Jesus Christ being the propitiation for his sins. Thus far, at least, they will show themselves in all the ordinary transactions of social life. On other more solemn occasions, they will stand out in bolder relief—in open avowal of his great demerits—in unfeigned expressions of sorrow for the same—and in *formal* acknowledgments of man’s lost

actuated by this spirit, will not let them slip without turning them to advantage—without employing those exercises of the heart, which are to himself, at once, the *evidence* and the *fruit* of his faith in Christ.

But besides those more secret transactions of his inmost breast, he will also often fall low on his knees before the throne of grace, and offer up prayers and supplications—if not with strong crying and tears, like his blessed Master in the days of his flesh—yet with a fervour somewhat answerable to the importance of his suit, while he implores his heavenly Father to “strengthen him with might by his Spirit in the inner man,” that “laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset him, he may run with patience the race that is set before him, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith,” and “walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.”

And as the consciousness of weakness will on all occasions direct the true disciple of Christ to that source from whence alone strength can be supplied, so will the Saviour's promise, " My grace is sufficient for thee," in all the vicissitudes of this chequered scene, calm his fears, and dissipate his sorrows, in the firm reliance, that " **He** is faithful who promised."

I pass on now to our **SECOND** particular—which was, to show what it is, to act in all we do, in reference to the *love* of Christ, without which, the injunction to "do all in the *name* of Christ," would, in my judgment, be very imperfectly fulfilled. The sacred writers were so sensible of this, that they seized on every occasion of *testifying* that love; to give full expression to which, language seems scarcely to have supplied them with terms which satisfied their emotions.

But to fulfil this obligation of love—to Christ, it is requisite, besides avowing it

in *words*, to exemplify it in *deeds*. This we have on the authority of our Lord himself—"He that hath my commandments, and *keepeth* them, he it is that *loveth* me." And the beloved disciple John bears testimony to the same purport—"This is *love*, that we *walk* after his *commandments*." No one, therefore, purposing to act in reference to the *love* of Christ, and so far "*in his name*," can be said to fulfil his purpose without *keeping* his *commandments*.

This is expressly made the *test* of such love. And observe, I pray you, brethren, *whose* commandments they are that we are bound to keep, in order to make proof of our love. They are not simply the ten commandments of the decalogue, (however extensively, but fairly interpreted,) but they are the commandments of *Christ*. "He that *keepeth* *my* commandments, (says he,) he it is that *loveth* me:" under which are comprehended all the precepts, admonitions,

and reproofs, interspersed through his various conversations with his disciples and others, as recorded in his history ; and most particularly in that sublime code of christian doctrine delivered in his celebrated Discourse on the Mount, than which, the world never saw, nor ever will see, any summary of morals, at once more concise and yet so comprehensive ; nor one so admirably adapted, if followed out in practice in all its bearings, to the perfecting of the human nature. These are the commandments we are required, as christians, to keep ; and our Saviour calling them "*my commandments*," implies, that they are to be kept, *because* they are *his commandments* ; and the doing of them on this ground, and from this motive, will be doing them "*in the name of Christ*," and on no other ground *can*. The truth of this sentiment is confirmed by an observation of our Saviour's own, where, laying down a test of *genuine discipleship*, he remarks, that

the giving but a cup of cold water to another—that is, the doing him ever so inconsiderable a service, *because he belonged to Christ*—or what means the same, “*in the name of Christ*,” will not lose its reward. This mode of doing, what we do, “*in the name of Christ*,” will never lack opportunities of exercise in our commerce with the world.

They will be as numerous and various as the occasions which present themselves, where we can assist or benefit our species. Assistance or benefit may be afforded to our fellow-creatures from a variety of motives; but then only can it be said to be rendered “*in the name of Christ*,” when we love the brethren *for Christ's sake*, or do them service *because Christ has commanded it*.

The THIRD way mentioned of doing all “*in the name of Christ*,” is, by rendering all our actions subservient to his *glory*. *The glory of Christ is, in the first place, promoted by every act of religious*

homage that we pay him—whether in the more secret devotions of the closet, or the more public services of the Sanctuary: but especially is it exalted, when kneeling at his Altar, we hail with one acclaim the glory of his name, ascribing “blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.” These, however, are the more *solemn* occasions of showing forth his glory, and, from their very nature are permitted us but seldom: whereas, we are enjoined, in our text, to “do *all* in the *name of Christ*”—or, according to the view we are now taking of the precept, *to the glory of Christ*. All the ordinary actions, therefore, of our *daily life* come under this precept, and are to be regulated by this rule.

We must “glorify Christ in our bodies and in our spirits which are his;” and we must let the light of our example so shine *before men*, that they may glorify him

also. There must be no halving of our duty between Christ and the world—no doing of our deeds to be seen of men—no compromising of the honour of *Christ*, to save *our own*—no timid shrinking from an *open* support of his cause—no reluctance to show ourselves his faithful soldiers and servants—to range on his side—and fight under his banners—in short, our every act must bear the impress of loyalty to our Prince, and of devotion to his glory, that it may as easily be known under what Prince we serve, as it is seen under what Sovereign the armies of the world are marshalled, by the uniform they wear. Nothing short of this can fully satisfy the demand made upon us in the text—to “do all in the name of Christ,” under the view we are now taking of the intent and meaning of that precept.

This brings me naturally to the consideration of that clause of our text, *wherein the Apostle singles out the duty*

of *thanksgiving*, seemingly as, from its very nature, peculiarly adapted to the setting forth of his glory—"giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

That the Apostle intends here to lay a *peculiar* emphasis on *this* mode of glorifying Christ, is confirmed by his urging the same duty with still greater force and explicitness of language, in the 20th verse of the 5th chap. of his Epistle to the Ephesians—"Giving thanks *always* for *all* things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"—"*always*, for *all* things"—it is impossible for words to be more comprehensive in their signification than these. They include all *occasions* and all *subjects* of *thanksgiving*—*public* and *private*—*personal* and *domestic*. They do not confine its obligation to *formal* observances in the *Church*; they demand its admission to our *hearts*, our *tables*, and our *beds*. Wherever a mercy is discerned, or a *blessing* felt, (and we are surrounded

with mercies and blessings), there our thankfulness for the same is required to be offered *through Christ*; in whose great name alone the offering can expect to find acceptance. And surely when we consider our immense obligation to our Lord and only Saviour—that HE is the procuring cause of all we have, and all we hope for—that to HIM we owe all the blessings of life, and all the mercies of eternity—that HE became poor, that we might be rich—that with HIS stripes we are healed—and by HIS death we live—surely, I say, when we reflect on this, we shall not think that the Apostle exacts a more than adequate return, when he only enjoins us to “give thanks always for all things in the *name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

But it is much to be feared, and to be lamented too, that a sense of this obligation, is either not always present to our *minds* when it should be, or is but lightly *regarded*. We should not else, in return-

ing thanks for our daily food, omit the mention of that name which is our only title to its enjoyment. The laudable custom of what is called, saying Grace, still keeps its hold, I should hope, in most families. But the offering is too commonly made without that reference to the *Mediator* which the Apostle enjoins ; and has, therefore, little right to look for acceptance.

If ye return thanks only in your own name, what do ye more than others that are *not* Christians ? Do not even the *heathens* the same ? The refined nations of antiquity were in nothing more remarkable, than in beginning their banquets with libations to their gods, as a grateful acknowledgment of the source whence they were supplied ; and even the more barbarous tribes of modern times, (as we are informed by travellers,) manifest, in their way, the same sense of obligation to a Power above them ; so that we should seem to have advanced

Christianity, but even in high places, a marked indifference is shown to the creed of those who shall legislate for a *Christian* nation, it is the bounden duty of every friend of the Gospel, to uphold, as much as in him lies, the *Christian name*. “He that is not *with* me, is *against* me,” says our Lord. Let this be indelibly impressed upon our memories—let it regulate every act of our lives—*personal*, *social*, and *domestic*—let it, in short, inspire us with that *firmness* and *decision* of character, that whoever else disowns Christ, it never shall (God willing) be laid to *our* charge.

F I N I S.

